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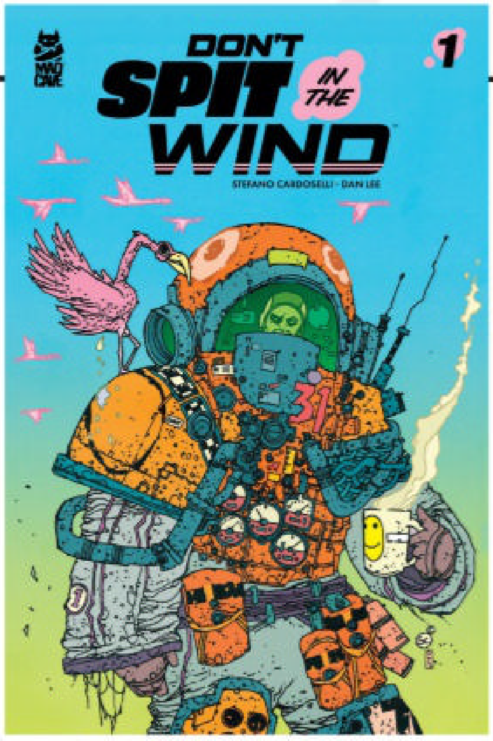

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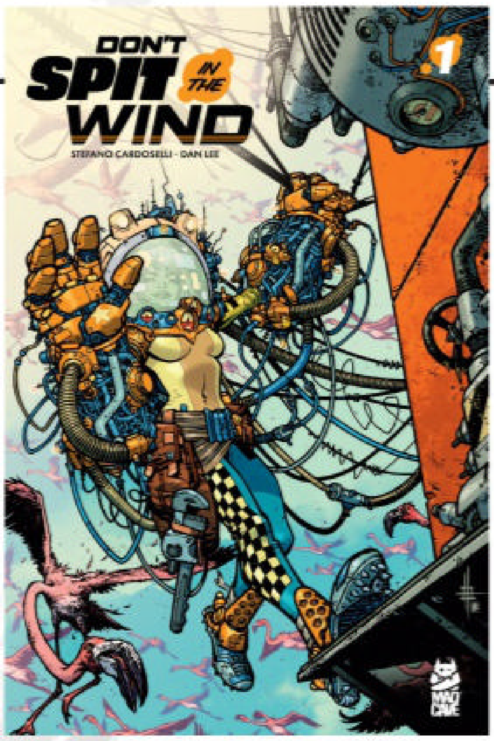

Cover B by Zach Howard & Nelson Dániel

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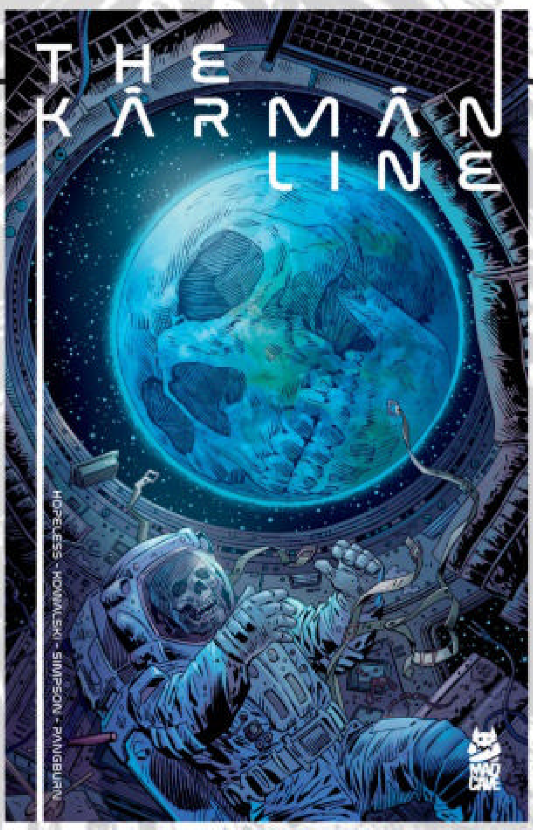

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LETTERER: CHAS! PANGBURN

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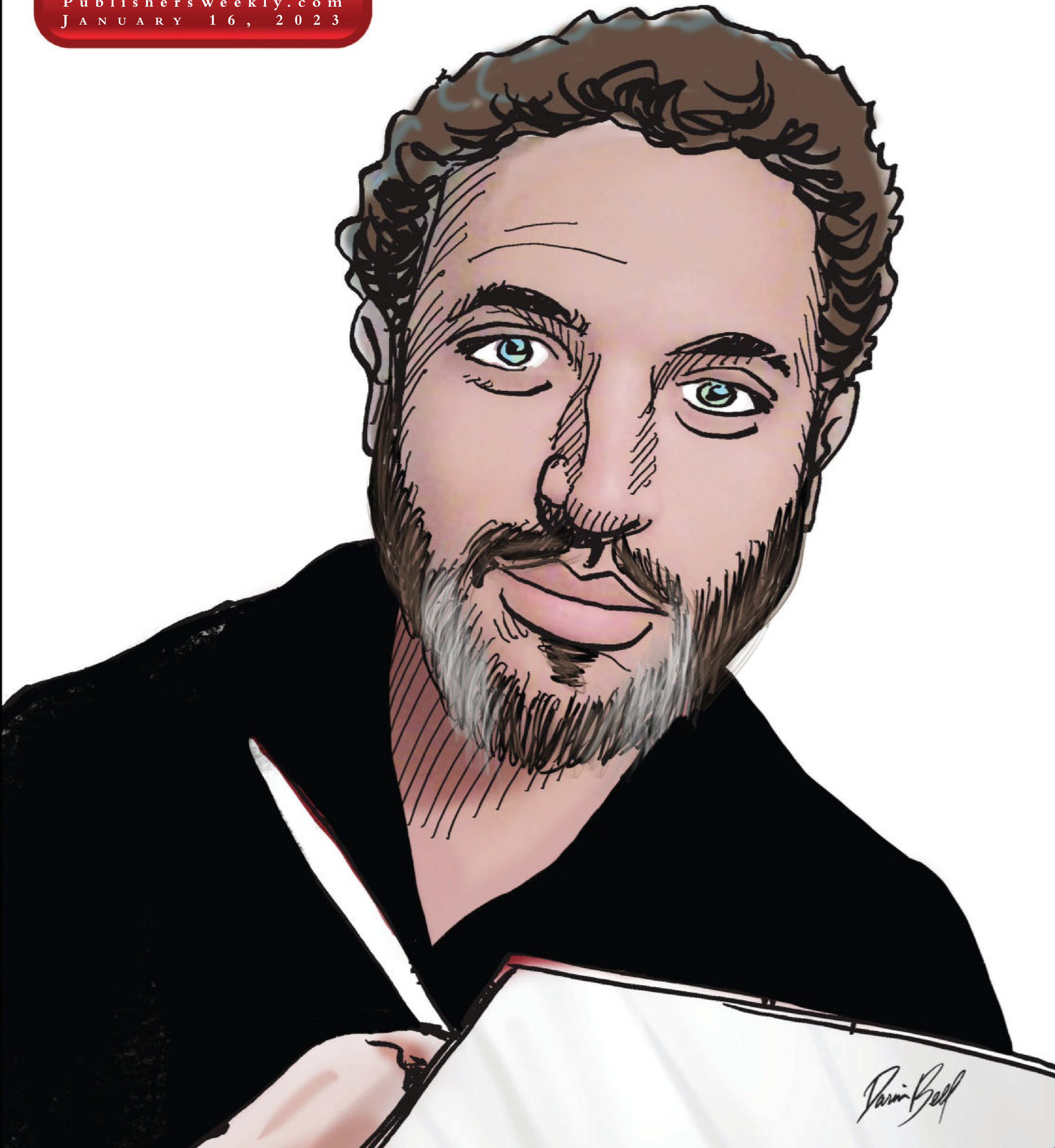
January 16, 2023

Darrin Bell

The Pulitzer winner's *The Talk* is in our roundup of the most anticipated graphic works coming this spring. Check out this and the other picks in *PW*'s first-ever standalone comics and graphic novels announcements feature, starting on p. 20.



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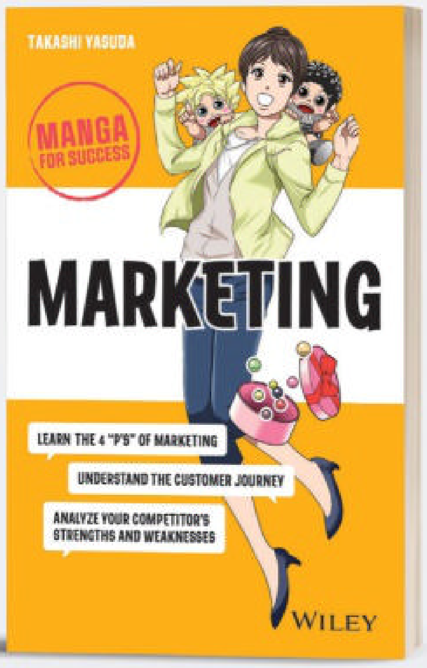
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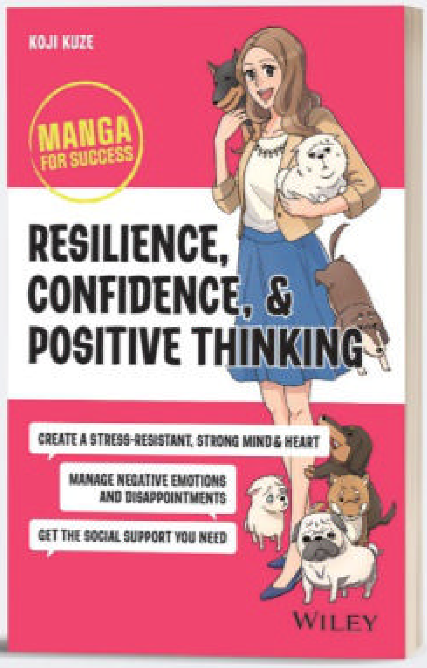
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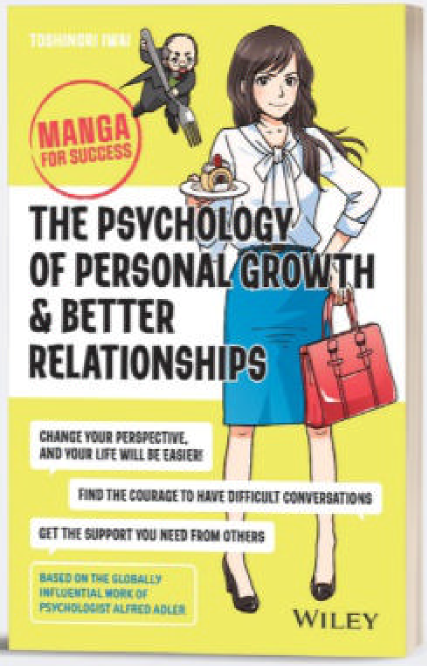
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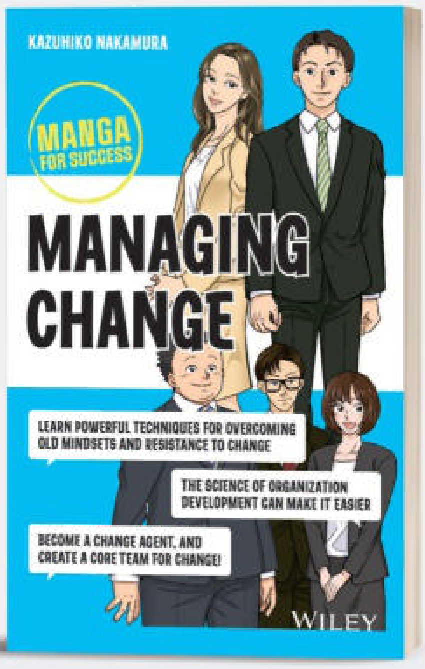
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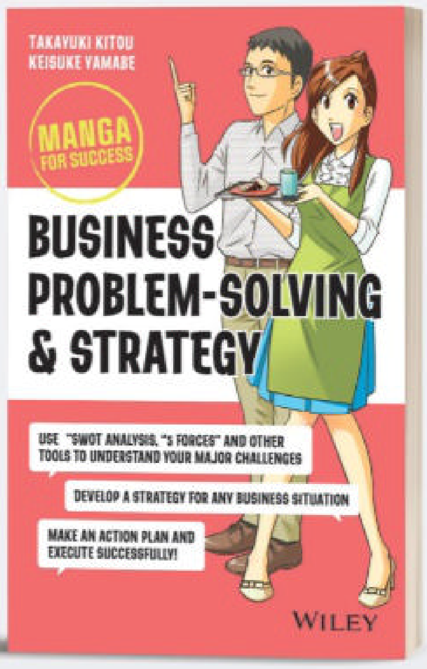
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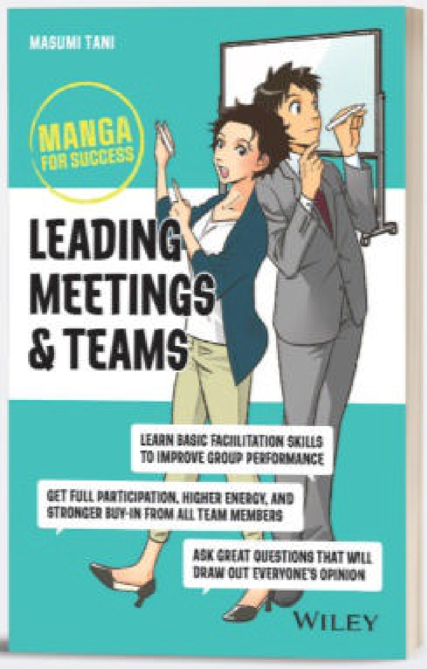
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Volume 270
Number 03
ISSN 0000-0019

January 16, 2023

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20 Spring Comics & Graphic Novels Announcements

Our first-ever standalone seasonal preview of the graphic publishing universe features the most hotly anticipated titles for adult, middle grade, and young adult readers, plus a special section devoted to manga.

50 Goodbye to All That

In her new graphic memoir, *New Yorker* cartoonist Julia Wertz finds sobriety while rejecting redemption narratives.

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8 The Year in Bookselling

Bad holiday weather put a damper on what was the most normal year for indie bookstores since 2019.

9 Print Sales Flat at the Start of 2023

Unit sales of print books dipped 0.1% in the week ended January 7, compared to the similar week last year, as gains in fiction categories were offset by losses in nonfiction.

10 Gina Centrello Retires

The head of the Random House Publishing Group has stepped down after almost 20 years on the job, though she'll stay on as a strategic adviser to PRH's U.S. board.

12 Romance Was Hot in 2022, Politics Were Not

Print unit sales of adult fiction rose 8.5% last year over 2021, led by a 52.4% increase in romance. But on the nonfiction side, where sales were down 10.3%, there were fewer happily ever afters.

14 Deals

Nathan J. Robinson and Noam Chomsky sell an examination of U.S. foreign policy to Penguin Press, and Princeton UP buys a book about miscarriage from anthropologist Kate Clancy.

Cover illustration by Darin Bell

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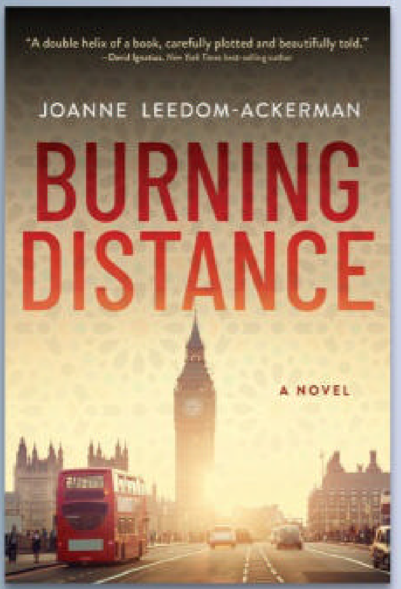
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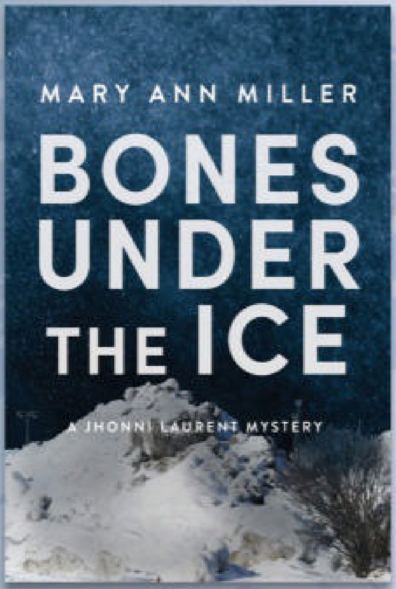
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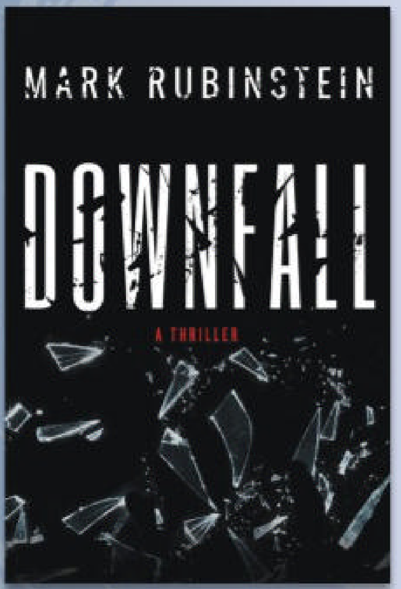
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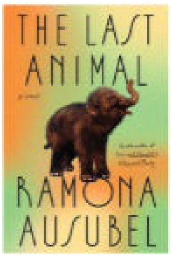

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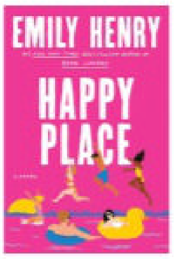

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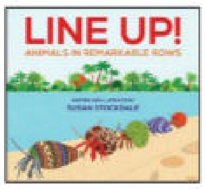

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Reviews Roundup
Picture book animalia

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Writing under the name, West Hand, Georgia Amiewalan has published three books—*My Little Pumpkin*, *The Long Road Home*, and its sequel *Return to Omohafe*. She has forty years of experience in early childhood development, which has given her more insight into what inspires these young minds.

West Hand has raised five children and loves to be around them. Their imaginations have given her inspiration to write a series of short stories for them. Her latest published book, *The Long Road Home: Return to Omohafe* features one of the beautiful worlds that are beyond imagination. Its main characters, Sky and Ocean, have always looked for adventure. And when their lives turn into one, they discover that adventure also comes with a responsibility that only the brave and noble can sail through.

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The Week in **Publishing**

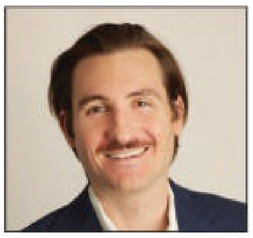
Calvin Reid, senior news editor, and **Peter Cannon**, senior reviews editor at *PW*—two pillars of the editorial team—have retired after 23 and 36 years, respectively.

Calvin Reid

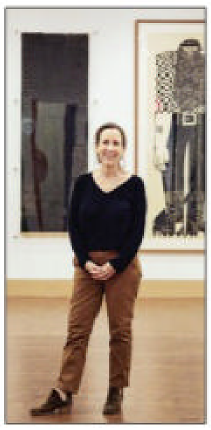
Peter Cannon

CJK Group, the Brainerd, Minn.–based printing and publishing services company, has acquired the assets of Allen Press, located in Lawrence, Kans. Allen will become part of CJK's Sheridan print group.

Ed Spade, previously senior v-p of online sales at HarperCollins, has been appointed president of sales and will report to CEO and president Brian Murray. He replaces Josh Marwell, who will remain in an advisory capacity until his retirement in April.



Alexandra Kennedy, executive director of the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Mass., will step down from her post later in 2023.



Call for Information

Feature: *Mysteries, Thrillers, and True Crime*
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We'd like to hear about forthcoming true crime accounts, plus standalone and first-in-series mysteries and thrillers. We're especially interested in new voices and those typically underrepresented in the genre. Pub dates: March through August. New titles only, please; no reprints. Submission deadline is January 23. Visit publishersweekly.com/MTTCspring23 to submit your titles.

Online & On-Air

The Week Ahead

Worldwide circulation for OverDrive in 2022 surpassed 555 million digital library lends, a 10% increase over 2021. Senior writer Andrew Albanese reports.
publishersweekly.com/lending

More to Come

Heidi MacDonald talks with children's book illustrator David Ezra Klein about his debut graphic novel, *Beaky Barnes: Egg on the Loose*, the story of a very unusual chicken and the havoc she wreaks.
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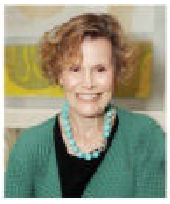
Children's Bookshelf


2023 COURTESY LIONSGATE

Since the 1970 publication of *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, Judy Blume has refused all offers for a film adaptation, until screenwriter and director Kelly Fremon Craig wrote Blume an email that changed her mind. We spoke with Blume in an exclusive behind-the-scenes interview on the set.
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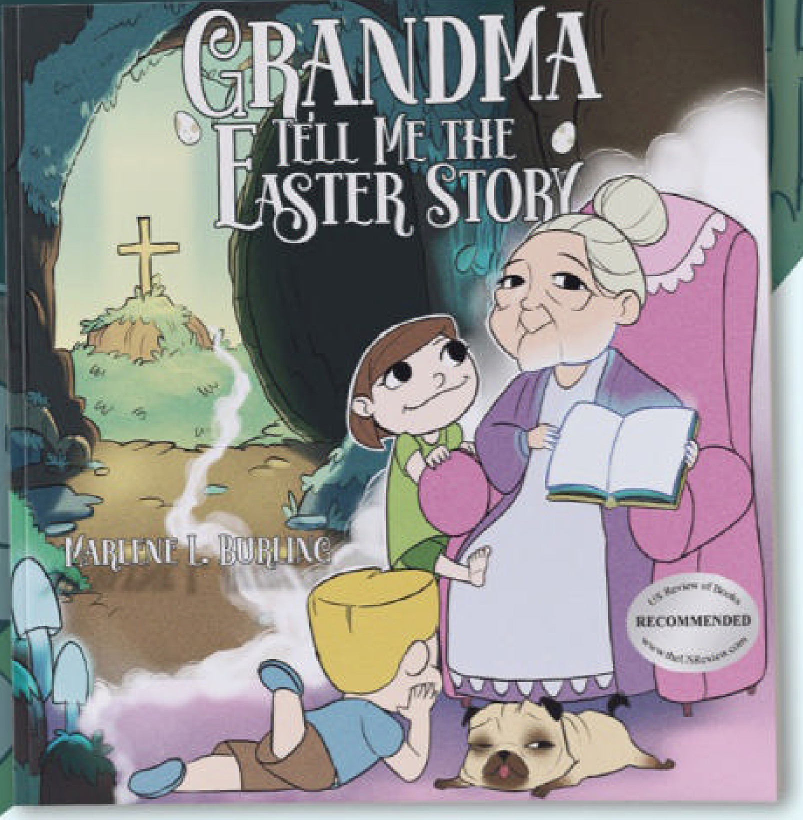
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Marlene L. Burling
A Morning Walk with God
Marlene L. Burling

Marlene L. Burling is a resident of Batavia, New York. She began writing devotional thoughts after the death of her husband. She is also a speaker for ladies' events and co-leads a grief share program at her church. One of her published books, *Grandma Tell Me the Easter Story,* was written for children to hear and learn the truths of God's Word. She wrote the book with references from the Bible so children can learn of our God who loves them and provides for them a way to go to heaven. The book has black and white illustrations that children can color and write their names on the blanks throughout the story.

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The Year in Bookselling

Bad holiday weather put a damper on what was the most normal year for indie bookstores since 2019

It has now been nearly three years since the start of the pandemic, and independent booksellers feel things are more or less back to normal. Generally speaking, indies across the country report similar trends: the return of customers to in-store shopping led to good, not remarkable, sales gains over 2021; online ordering has fallen off; books promoted on TikTok are doing well and bringing in younger customers; stores are hosting in-person events again, though not at pre-pandemic levels; and customers are starting to wince at the rising prices of hardcovers.

According to Mitch Kaplan, owner of the Books & Books chain in the Miami area, sales last year were up 18% over 2021 and were comparable to the years before the pandemic. "You could see a shift when people started to feel somewhat safe and more comfortable in spaces where shopping was going on," Kaplan said. Younger shoppers, in particular, were back out in numbers, which he thinks is a good omen for future generations of readers. "It is heartening to see the amount of young people in their 20s and 30s shopping for books. Sometimes you'd just see a store full of people under 40. Perhaps they were less skittish about going out? That is not to say we didn't see a lot of older people, and many were beginning to venture out, too."

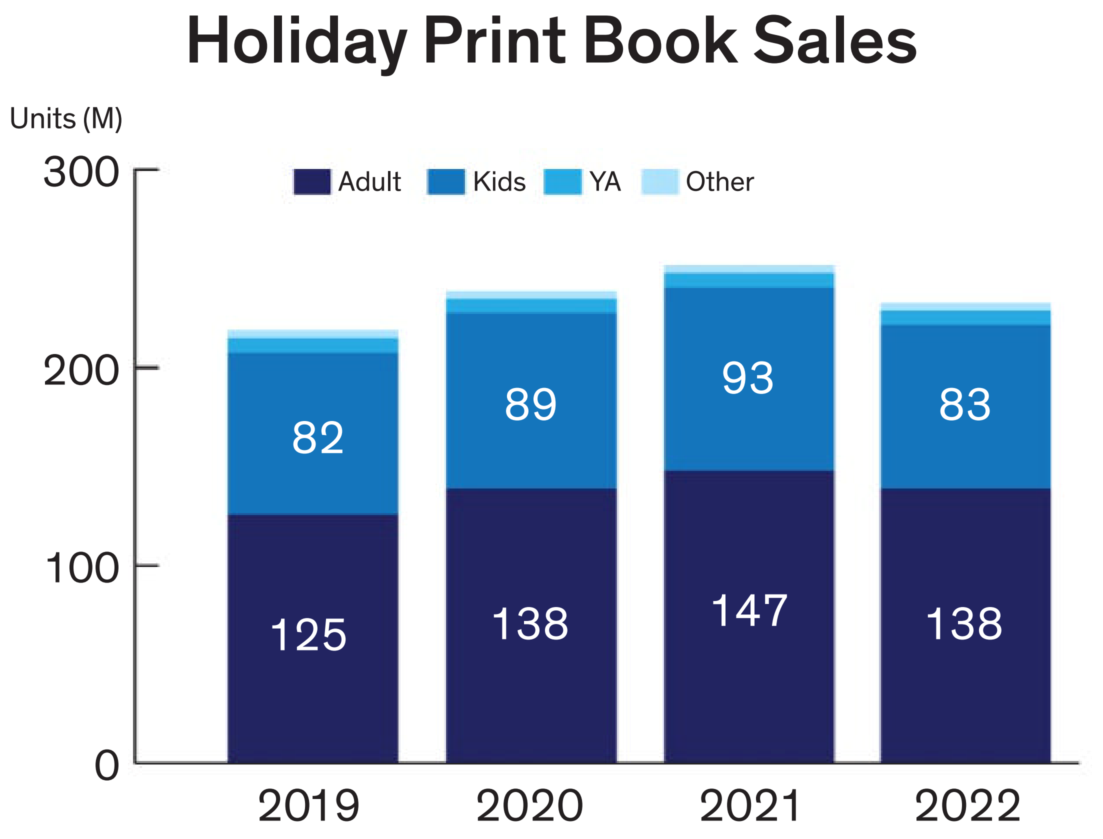
Kaplan noted that Miami didn't have the severe weather that other parts of the U.S. did during November and December, when Books & Books' sales rose 10% over the same period in 2021. While there were no identifiable blockbusters of the season, Kaplan said interest was strong in Hernan Diaz's *Trust* and Patti Smith's *A Book of Days*.

At Greenlight Bookstore in Brooklyn, it was a different story, with sales down 8% for the year compared to 2021, and down 16% for the holiday season. "Of course we've all been speculating about the reasons for this," said owner Jessica Stockton Bagnulo. The Greenlight management team, according to Bagnulo, pointed to the lack of big books, and also economic anxiety due to inflation and job insecurity, which is hitting cities like New York hard.

Greenlight's Flatbush store, which is in a residential neighborhood, saw high sales during the pandemic, as people worked from home. But those sales have softened as workers return to their offices. Online orders also dropped significantly compared to last year, Bagnulo said.

Holiday sales were up a bit at Boswell Books in Milwaukee, said owner Daniel Goldin. Sales were curtailed for a lot of second-tier and backlist titles that were out of stock, though. "We also had issues with Ingram," he explained. "They've dramatically cut inventory at the Fort Wayne, Ind., warehouse, even for regional titles, and it seemed like the LaVergne warehouse was backed up."

As a result, Boswell's strongest sales were for books that "everyone was selling—*Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, *Demon Copperfield* by Barbara Kingsolver, *An Immense World* by Ed Yong, *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy—but they were all just really great sales, not over-the-top nuts." Sales of *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid—a TikTok favorite—


Holiday Print Book Sales

For the 13-week period ended December 31.

Unit sales of print books fell 8% in the 2022 holiday period compared to 2021.

SOURCE: NPD BOOKSCAN

doubled over 2021. In the end, Goldin said, sales for the year were up about 3% at Boswell.

Winter weather did have an impact on stores in the Midwest. Terry Cain, operations manager/book buyer at Prairie Lights Bookstore in Iowa City, Iowa, said sales were up for the year, though the blizzard that hit the city on December 22 and the bitter cold that followed put a damper on things. “We had a really strong Christmas and we were up a little over last year,” Cain noted. “But we would have done even better if the weather hadn’t been so bad right before Christmas.” The store’s three top sellers for the season were Michelle Obama’s *The Light We Carry*, Barbara Kingsolver’s *Demon Copperhead*, and Louise Penny’s *World of Curiosities*.

Cain noted that sales were helped by the return of in-store author events in May after not having any since February 2020. The Iowa City Book Festival also resumed this fall, and the store took advantage of author appearances at the event. “Only two of the store’s top 10 bestsellers this year did not involve author events,” she said.

David Enyeart, manager of Next Chapter Booksellers in St. Paul, Minn., reported that sales in 2022 were up 10% over 2021, despite a softer finish to the year. “Our holiday season was a little down from 2021, with all the decline coming in November,” Enyeart said. “December was flat, almost to the penny. We weren’t able to replicate last year’s successful ‘buy early’ campaign.”

At Rainy Day Books in Fairway, Kans., weather got in the way of holiday sales. “We lost a day and half in sales the week before Christmas due to the freakishly cold weather,” said store owner Vivian Jennings. “That was tough, as usually sales the last week before Christmas are substantial. But we still came out ahead a little bit over last year—about 2%.” Lackluster holiday sales notwithstanding, sales for the year rose almost 13%, Jennings added.

Texas experienced an unexpected cold snap over the holidays, but Dallas’s Interabang Books still managed to end the season flat with 2021, according to business manager Brian Weiskopf. “For the year, we were up 10% over 2021, which was our goal,” he noted. A variety of titles sold well, including fan favorites like *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus (“We were lucky we got that in stock and didn’t run out”), *Trust* by Hernan Diaz, and *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks.

Unusual weather also impacted California. Casey Coonerty Protti, manager of Bookshop Santa Cruz,

The Weekly Scorecard

Print Sales Flat at Start of 2023

Unit sales of print books dipped 0.1% in the week ended Jan. 7, 2023, from the comparable week in 2022, at outlets that report to NPD BookScan. The young adult fiction category had the biggest increase, with sales up 18.5% over the week ended Jan. 8, 2022. The gain was led by a number of new titles, including *The Stolen Heir*, the latest from Holly Jackson, which sold more than 29,000 copies in its first week, and *Nick and Charlie* by Alice Oseman, which sold more than 17,000 copies. Adult fiction had another good week, with sales up 12.2% over last year. The Colleen Hoover juggernaut rolled on into 2023: she had five of the top six bestsellers in the category, led by *It Starts with Us*, followed by *It Ends with Us*, which sold about 62,000 and 55,000 copies, respectively. Danielle Steel’s newest title, *Without a Trace*, sold nearly 18,000 copies in its first week, putting it in ninth place on the category list. Sales of juvenile fiction were flat in the week. *Moon Rising* by Tui T. Sutherland remained #1 in the category in its second week, selling almost 22,000 copies. Adult nonfiction sales fell 8.2% from 2022. Two books on the January 6th report were in the top 10 on the category list, with the Harper edition in second place, selling more than 39,000 copies, and Celadon’s edition in eighth place, selling more than 12,000 copies. James Clear’s *Atomic Habits* remained in the top spot, selling more than 55,000 copies; a year ago *Atomic Habits* was also #1, selling about 48,000 copies.

TOTAL SALES OF PRINT BOOKS (IN THOUSANDS)

	JAN. 8, 2022	JAN. 7, 2023	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Total	14,782	14,769	-0.1%	0%

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY CATEGORY (IN THOUSANDS)

	JAN. 8, 2022	JAN. 7, 2023	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Adult Nonfiction	6,368	5,845	-8.2%	-8.2%
Adult Fiction	3,431	3,848	12.2%	12.2%
Juvenile Nonfiction	939	842	-10.3%	-10.3%
Juvenile Fiction	2,715	2,714	0%	0%
Young Adult Fiction	595	705	18.5%	18.5%
Young Adult Nonfiction	78	65	-16.6%	-16.6%

UNIT SALES OF PRINT BOOKS BY FORMAT (IN THOUSANDS)

	JAN. 8, 2022	JAN. 7, 2023	CHGE WEEK	CHGE YTD
Hardcover	4,105	3,871	-5.7%	-5.7%
Trade Paperback	8,433	8,618	2.2%	2.2%
Mass Market Paperback	665	521	-21.6%	-21.6%
Board Books	687	793	15.3%	15.3%

SOURCE: NPD BOOKSCAN AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY. NPD’S U.S. CONSUMER MARKET PANEL COVERS APPROXIMATELY 80% OF THE PRINT BOOK MARKET AND CONTINUES TO GROW.

reported that heavy rain on Thanksgiving kept customers home, giving a slow start to the season. "2021 was so unique," she noted. "People shopped really early that year, so some of the early fall 2022 numbers weren't really hitting as high, but we caught up."

Overall, Protti said, the store's sales were "slightly up" last year over 2021. "Tourists finally returned to the region, and that makes a huge difference. We saw a huge spike in backlist, especially TikTok titles, and genres like romance and manga, as well as travel writing."

Regarding the TikTok phenomenon, Protti added, "The great thing is, someone's out there pushing books on social media, bringing in a lot of younger people, changing the categories people are looking for, and bringing up the backlist. The not-so-good thing is that publishers are turning so much attention to TikTok, so if you have a midlist title or something that's not a TikTok book, it's not taking off. That's where our expertise as booksellers is important—in keeping what people are reading diverse."

One question booksellers—and consumers—face in 2023 is whether or not inflation and the threat of an economic recession will put a damper on book sales, particularly sales of hardcovers. Karen Emmerling, owner of Beach Books in Seaside, Ore., had a great 2022—"up 8% over 2021 and probably our best year ever," she said. She spoke for most booksellers when she said the price of hardcovers was beginning to seem untenable.

"When you're looking at $30 for a novel, it's getting pretty steep," Emmerling said. "It's not a detriment at this point, but I can see it becoming a real problem. We're getting a lot more questions of, 'When will this hardcover be out in paper?' We've always had that with a portion of our customers, but now people seem more willing to wait. It becomes a question of, 'Will you remember a year from now that this was something you wanted to read?' "

—Ed Nawotka, Claire Kirch, and Nathalie op de Beeck

Centrello Retires from RH

Gina Centrello, head of the Random House Publishing Group ("Little Random") since 2003, has retired. The surprising news came in a memo from Penguin Random House CEO Madeline McIntosh, who told employees that, given the strong leadership team Centrello has built, "we can take the time we need, in consultation with members of this executive team, to develop the plan for Gina's succession. In the meantime, we will lean on Bill Takes, executive v-p, business strategy, to ensure everything continues to run smoothly and successfully on a day-to-day basis."

After joining Pocket Books in 1984 as a copy editor, Centrello was named head of the publisher in 1994. She moved to Random House in 1999 as president and publisher of Ballantine before being promoted to head of Random House, where, despite numerous corporate restructurings, she had remained. McIntosh said Centrello will serve as a strategic adviser to PRH's U.S. board.

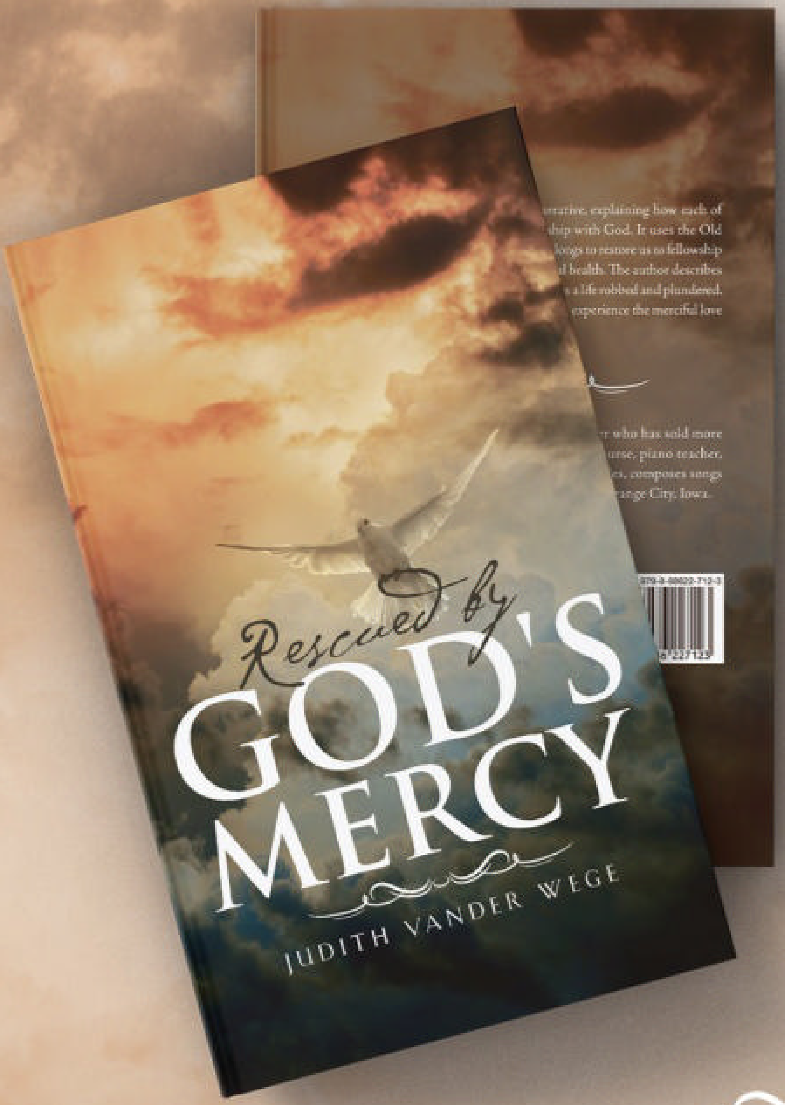
The roster of critically acclaimed and bestselling authors Random House has published under Centrello is large and includes Brené Brown, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Glennon Doyle, Diana Gabaldon, Ina Garten, Laura Hillenbrand, Ibram X. Kendi, Tracy Kidder, Debbie Macomber, George R.R. Martin, Matthew McConaughey, Jon Meacham, Jodi Picoult, Taylor Jenkins Reid, Salman Rushdie, George Saunders, Curtis Sittenfeld, and Tara Westover, as well as Barack and Michelle Obama and, most recently, Prince Harry.

Beyond the publishing program Centrello built, "the enduring hallmark of Gina's tenure will be the impact she has had on us as people," McIntosh wrote. "I know I'm only one of many indebted to her for her mentorship; I'm grateful for every minute of the support she has provided me, her peers, her employees, and our authors."

In her own memo to employees, Centrello wrote that it has been a "great honor and privilege to lead Random House, producing work that will endure, navigating challenging transitions, and watching our business grow."

"Over the past few years, I've spent a lot of time thinking about my future, and when the right moment might be for me to transition to a new way of leading. I've come to believe that that moment is now," she continued. "This decision is, of course, bittersweet. I have truly loved leading Random House, and publishing books that matter and inspire change, books that entertain and thrill, and books that help us to be better people. I have relished watching your growth, as well, and I am excited that a new generation of brilliant publishing leaders and managers—the best in the business, as far as I'm concerned—will continue to thrive and soar." **—Jim Milliot**

JUDITH VANDER WEGE



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Judith Vander Wege is from Orange City, Iowa and attends the First Reformed Church. She is a freelance Christian writer who has been published in hundreds of Christian periodicals. She is also a former nurse, a piano teacher, bookkeeper, and paraeducator. She currently leads Bible studies and composes Christian songs and poems. This book, *Rescued By God's Mercy*, narrates how we can have a more intimate relationship with God. In the book, the author uses the Book of Isaiah to describe how God longs to restore us to fellowship with him. She uses her own experiences to explain how God shows his mercy.

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Romance Was Hot in 2022

Last year was definitely a tale of two categories when it came to sales of adult books. Unit sales of fiction titles rose 8.5% over 2021, led by a 52.4% increase in sales of romance books, at outlets that report to NPD BookScan. Five other fiction genres had increases in the year, including a 17.4% jump in sales of fantasy titles. 2021's hottest adult fiction category, graphic novels, had a 4.6% increase.

It was an entirely different story in adult nonfiction, as sales fell 10.3% in 2022. Only one subcategory—travel—posted an increase in the year, with sales up 13.4%. The biggest decline came in what has been a hot subcategory, history/law/political science, where sales dropped 20.8%.

The list of bestselling romance titles in 2022 is a long one, led by Colleen Hoover, whose *It Starts with Us* and *It Ends with Us* topped the romance charts. Those two books, along with a handful of other Hoover titles, resulted in a banner year for Simon & Schuster's Atria Books imprint and helped S&S sell more than 290 million copies of romance books last year, topping HarperCollins, which sold more than 180 million (sales include those of distribution clients as well as in-house imprints).

Sourcebooks also had a solid year, selling almost 144 million units. Sourcebooks' Bloom Books imprint scored with *Things We Never Got Over* by Lucy Score, which sold more than 330,000 copies, while Elle Kennedy's *The Deal* sold more than 130,000 copies. Sourcebooks' Casablanca imprint sold more than 169,000 copies of *Neon Gods* by Katee Robert.

A Court of Thorns and Roses by Sarah J. Maas was tops in the fantasy category, selling nearly 441,000 copies for publisher Bloomsbury, and her *House of Sky and Breath* sold nearly 285,000 copies. Maas's success helped Macmillan, which is Bloomsbury's distributor, sell 182 million copies of fantasy books last year.

The big slide in history/law/political science was due in part the lack of a huge bestseller to match 2021's million-copy-selling *American Marxism* by Mark R. Levin. The top political book last year was *Red Handed: How American Elites Get Rich by Helping China Win* by Peter Schweizer, which sold about 245,000 copies. That sales figure was topped in 2021 by *American Marxism* and *Peril* by Bob Woodward and Robert Costa, which sold more than 390,000 copies.

—Jim Milliot

ADULT PRINT UNIT SALES BY GENRE, 2021–2022

(in thousands)

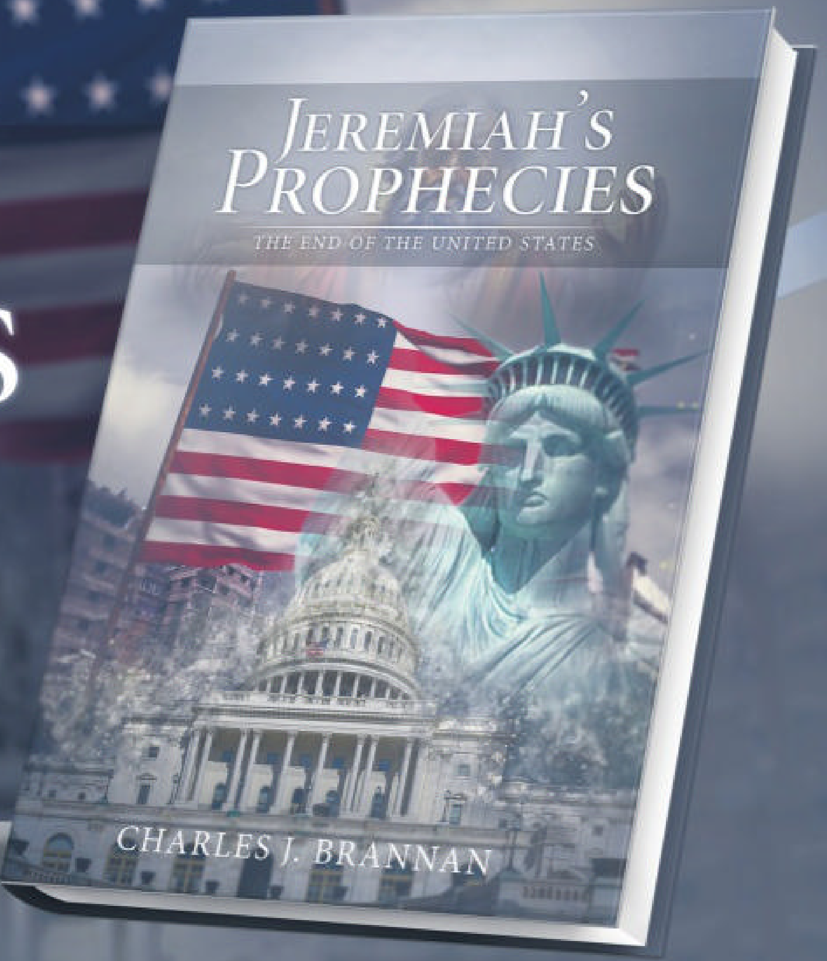
	2021	2022	CHANGE
Fiction	**173,065**	**187,821**	**8.5%**
Action/Adventure	1,824	1,729	-5.2%
Classics	7,850	7,254	-7.6
Fantasy	11,100	13,034	17.4%
General Fiction	48,574	49,210	1.3%
Graphic Novels	33,725	35,293	4.6%
Horror/Occult/Psychological	3,081	3,349	8.7%
Mystery/Detective	11,608	11,135	-4.1%
Religion	2,481	1,957	-21.2%
Romance	23,680	36,092	52.4%
Science Fiction	5,852	4,591	-21.6%
Suspense/Thriller	21,561	22,707	5.3%
Westerns	1,724	1,464	-15.1
Nonfiction	**322,787**	**289,612**	**-10.3%**
Art/Architecture/Design/Photography	8,747	7,670	-12.3%
Biography/Autobiography/Memoir	23,158	21,914	-5.4%
Business/Economics	22,863	21,564	-5.7%
Computers	2,864	2,502	-12.6%
Cooking/Entertaining/Crafts	22,631	20,268	-10.4%
Hobbies/Antiques/Games	18,643	16,893	-9.4
General Nonfiction	49,654	42,025	-15.4%
Health/Fitness/Medicine/Sports	20,623	18,004	-12.7%
History/Law/Political Science	22,370	17,711	-20.8%
Home/Gardening	3,803	3,402	-10.5%
Humor	4,905	4,676	-4.7%
Performing Arts	11,431	10,289	-10.0%
Reference	36,843	31,663	-14.1%
Religion	46,947	45,522	-3.0%
Self-Help	22,398	19,944	-11.0%
Travel	4,900	5,558	13.4%

SOURCE: NPD BOOKSCAN

CHARLES J. BRANNAN

JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES

THE END OF THE UNITED STATES



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Charles J. Brannan was born and raised in Alabama. He has a bachelor's degree in both aerospace engineering and chemistry. He has worked as an engineer most of his life where he has set up a procedure for testing asphalt and aggregate. Currently, he is an elder delivering sermons in Abundant Life Church. His books, *Jeremiah's Prophecies: The End of the United States,* focuses on the prophet Jeremiah who's spirit is reborn to prophesize about the coming judgment of the United States. In the book, he cites prophecies of coming events for the United States and other countries, showing us what is happening today and the consequences that will follow.

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DEALS

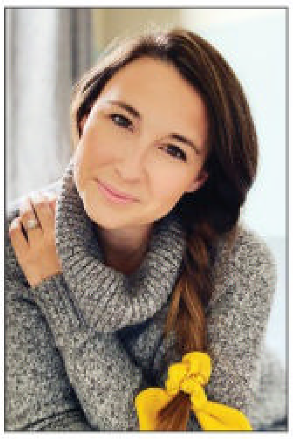
DEAL OF THE WEEK

■ Chomsky, Robinson Sell 'Myth'

In her first acquisition at Penguin Press, **Sara Bershtel** bought world rights to **Nathan J. Robinson** and **Noam Chomsky**'s *The Myth of American Idealism* for six figures. Robinson (*Responding to the Right*) is the editor-in-chief of *Current Affairs* magazine. His agent, **Mark Gottlieb** at Trident Media Group, said the book, subtitled *How U.S. Foreign Policy Endangers the World* and slated for fall or winter 2024, offers a "highly accessible and readable critique of American power, showing how recent U.S. foreign policy decisions have caused disastrous harm across the globe." Chomsky (*Hegemony or Survival*) was represented by **Anthony Arnove** at the Roam Agency.

Robinson (l.) and Chomsky

■ Adams's 'Rules' Go to Dell


Adams

Dell's **Shauna Summers** acquired world rights to three novels by **Sarah Adams**. The first, *The Rule Book*, is a sequel to the April 2022 bestseller (and BookTok hit) *The Cheat Sheet*. Dell said *The Rule Book* "features an aspiring sports agent assigned to represent her college ex-boyfriend, who's now an NFL football star." The other two titles in the deal, brokered by **Kim Lionetti** at BookEnds Literary, will be entries in the author's Rome, Kentucky series.

■ McCallum's 'Girls' Land at Flatiron

McCallum

North American rights to the debut YA novel *Free Girls* by **Kristen McCallum** were bought by **Sarah Barley** and **Sydney Jeon** at Flatiron Books. The publisher said the book is about a teenager named Jas who is "adjusting to her new home, new family, and new life while keeping the secret that she's spent the last year in a juvenile detention center." *Free Girls* was sold by **Sara Shandler** and **Joelle Hobeika** at Alloy Entertainment and is tentatively slated for fall 2024.

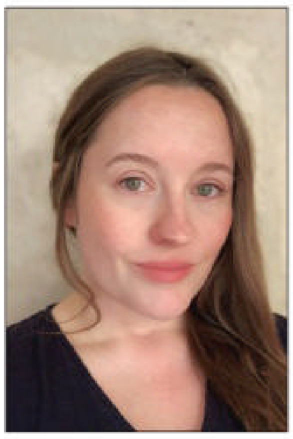
■ Penguin Buys Molly in Paris

© DIANA RAGLAND

Ringwald

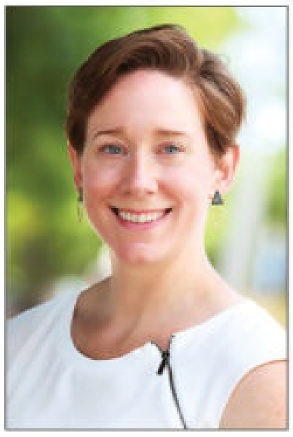
Molly Ringwald sold North American rights to a memoir, *The Paris Years*, to **Ann Godoff** at Penguin Press. Penguin said the actor shares intimate details about "the transformational years she spent living and working in Paris in her 20s," adding that the book, which had no pub date at press time, is "a love letter to the country and culture that inspired her to dare, to take chances, and to chart her path as an artist and as a woman." **Jin Auh** at the Wylie Agency represented Ringwald in the agreement.

■ Gendron 'Coaches' for Princeton

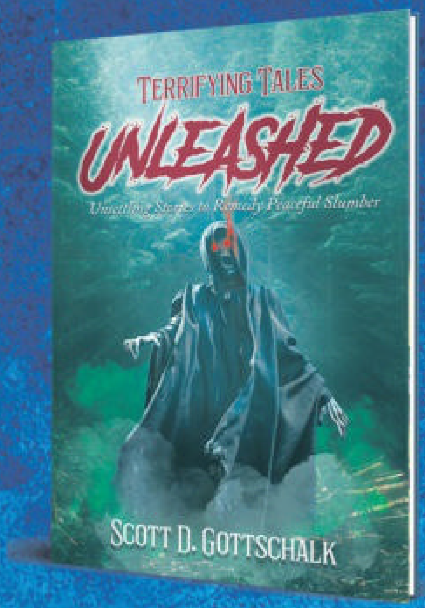

Gendron

For Chronicle Prism, **Cara Bedick** nabbed North American rights to **Alice Gendron**'s *The Mini ADHD Coach*. Gendron has a popular Instagram account of the same name, and the publisher called the book, set for August, "the first truly accessible self-help book for ADHD readers." It includes "tips and ADHD hacks that can help readers to work with their condition." PRH UK's **Catherine Wood** brokered the sale.

■ Clancy Gets 'Interrupted' at Princeton


Clancy

Princeton University Press's **Alison Kalett** acquired world English rights to *Pregnancy Interrupted* by **Kate Clancy**. The author is a professor of anthropology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and the publisher said that the book, subtitled *The New Science of Miscarriage* and scheduled for 2025, gives readers "a clear-eyed and compassionate guide for conceptualizing the science" behind pregnancy loss. Clancy pulls from personal and professional experience to show how "of all the possible outcomes of an encounter between a sperm and an egg, a baby is the least likely, yet most expected; the least biologically supported, but the most culturally demanded." Clancy is also the author of the April-slated *Period: The Real Story of Menstruation* (also from Princeton). She was represented by **Michelle Tessler** at Tessler Literary Agency.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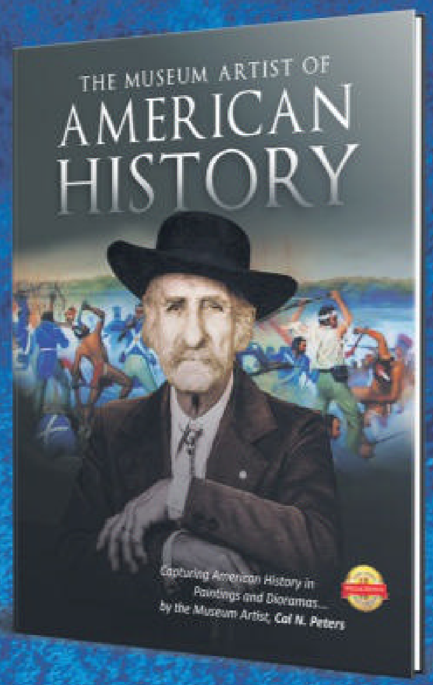
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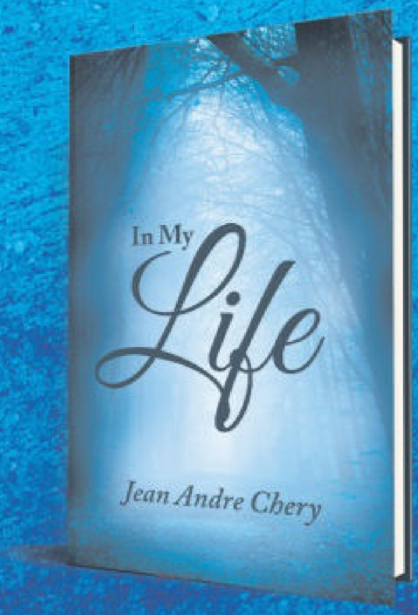
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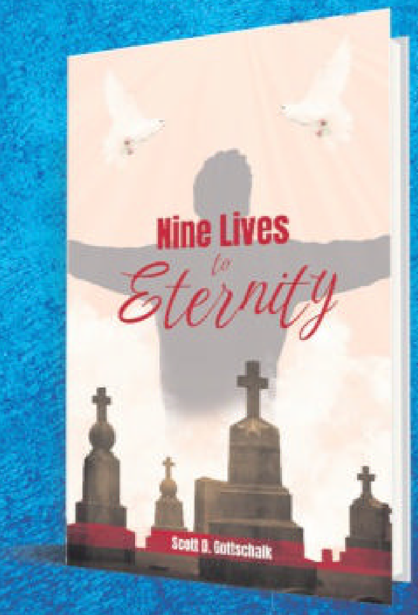
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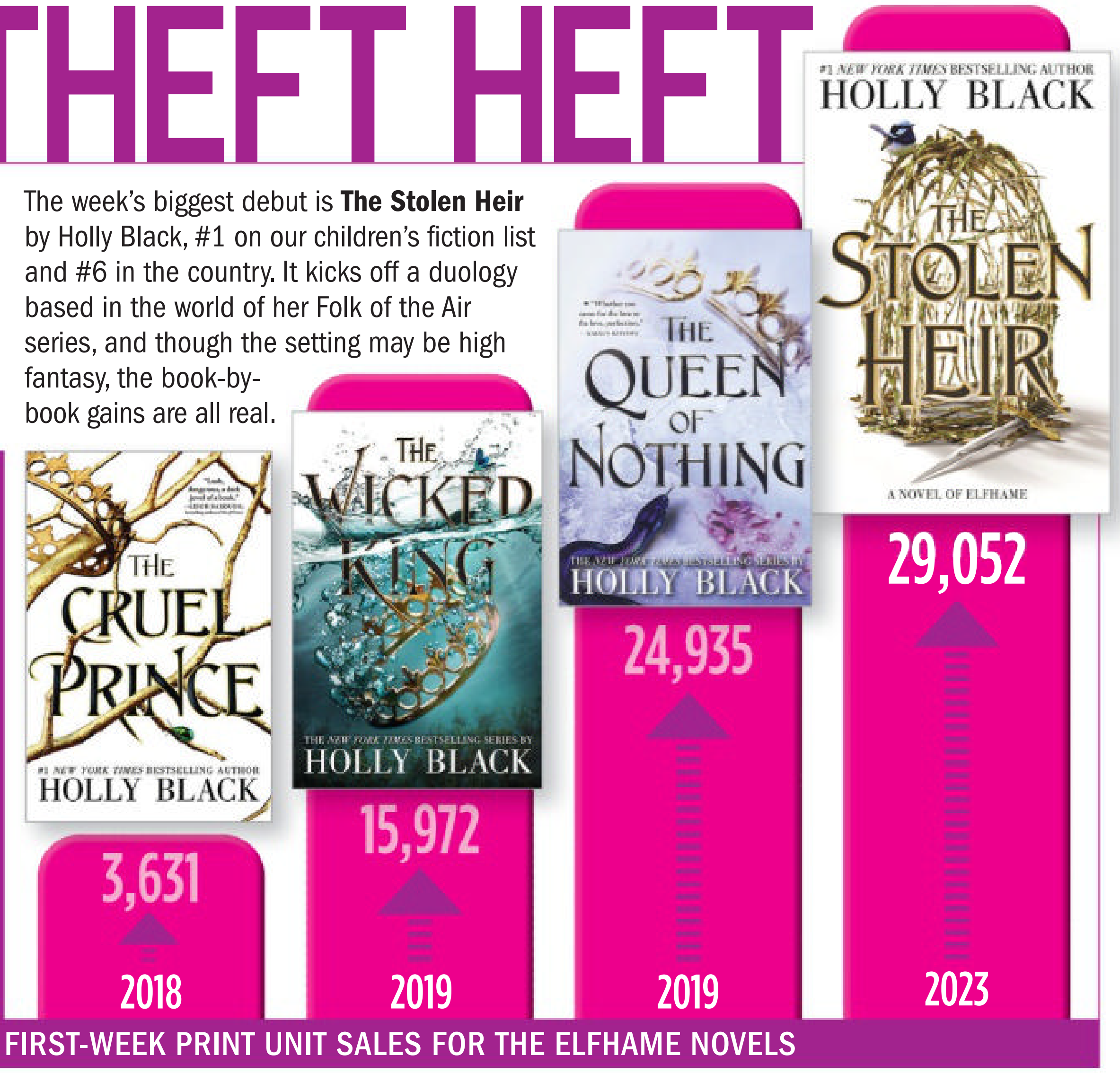
Behind the Bestsellers JAN. 1–7, 2023

By Carolyn Juris

THEFT HEFT

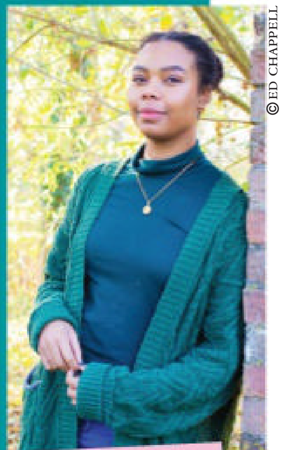
The week's biggest debut is **The Stolen Heir** by Holly Black, #1 on our children's fiction list and #6 in the country. It kicks off a duology based in the world of her Folk of the Air series, and though the setting may be high fantasy, the book-by-book gains are all real.



FIRST-WEEK PRINT UNIT SALES FOR THE ELFHAME NOVELS

Meet Cute

Adult romance author Talia Hibbert makes the move to YA with **Highly Suspicious and Unfairly Cute**, an "enemies-to-lovers romance with whip-smart banter, British sensibilities, and energetic verve," per our review, which said Hibbert strikes "a quintessential balance of romance and comedy." It debuts at #16 on our children's fiction list and is the first book from Joy Revolution, headed by married authors Nicola Yoon and David Yoon. The Random House imprint formed in 2020 to publish YA romances written by and starring people of color; Amalie Howard's *Queen Bee* follows in April.



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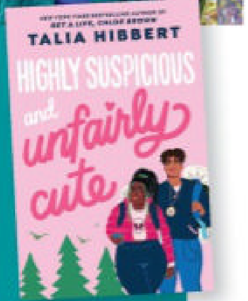

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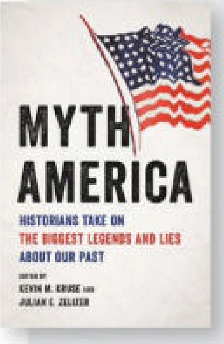
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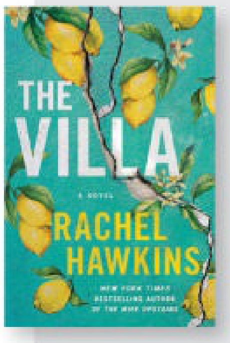
Edited by Kevin M. Kruse and Julian E. Zelizer
#16 Hardcover Nonfiction

"Historical truths counteract America's crisis of disinformation in these illuminating and sharply written essays gathered by Princeton historians Kruse and Zelizer," per our starred review. "Distinguished by its impressive roster of contributors and lucid arguments, this ought to be required reading."



THE VILLA
Rachel Hawkins
#16 Hardcover Fiction

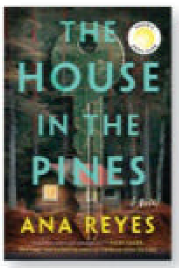
Our review said that "friendship and professional jealousy fuel this nail-biter" about childhood best friends who as adults reconnect at the site of a notorious murder. "Intense characters complement the brisk plot, which shifts smoothly between the present and 1974."

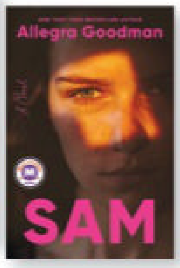
In Clubland

The new year ushered in a new round of book club picks, and this week, novels by a first-timer and a veteran make our hardcover fiction list.

The Reese's Book Club pick, **The House in the Pines** by Ana Reyes, lands at #3. "Well-developed characters and a nice balance between the main narrative and the backstories draw the reader in, but the action builds to an implausible and disappointing ending," per our review of this debut thriller. "Reyes shows enough talent to suggest she can do better next time."

Allegra Goodman lands at #20 with **Sam**, the Read with Jenna pick. "A competitive rock climber comes of age at the turn of the 21st century in the bracing latest from Goodman," according to our review. "It's impressive how much emotional power is packed into this relatively contained story."





TOP 10 OVERALL

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	UNITS
1	**It Starts with Us**	Colleen Hoover	Atria	62,846
2	**Atomic Habits**	James Clear	Avery	55,530
3	**It Ends with Us**	Colleen Hoover	Atria	55,426
4	**The January 6 Report**	–	Harper	39,275
5	**Verity**	Colleen Hoover	Grand Central	37,770
6	**The Stolen Heir**	Holly Black	Little, Brown	29,052
7	**The Light We Carry**	Michelle Obama	Crown	25,963
8	**Ugly Love**	Colleen Hoover	Atria	25,777
9	**The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo**	Taylor Jenkins Reid	Washington Square	25,509
10	**Moon Rising (Wings of Fire Graphic Novel #6)**	Sutherland/Holmes	Graphix	21,815

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ALL PRINT UNIT SALES PER NPD BOOKSCAN EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Adult Bestsellers | JAN. 1–7, 2023

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Hardcover Frontlist Fiction

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	1	**Lessons in Chemistry**	Bonnie Garmus	Doubleday	9780385547345	20,740
2	–	**Without a Trace**	Danielle Steel	Delacorte	9781984821867	17,776
3	–	**The House in the Pines**	Ana Reyes	Dutton	9780593186718	15,829
4	2	**The Boys from Biloxi**	John Grisham	Doubleday	9780385548922	13,923
5	4	**Fairy Tale**	Stephen King	Scribner	9781668002179	10,324
6	9	**Demon Copperhead**	Barbara Kingsolver	Harper	9780063251922	9,760
7	5	**Mad Honey**	Picoult/Boylan	Ballantine	9781984818386	8,449
8	7	**Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow**	Gabrielle Zevin	Knopf	9780593321201	8,413
9	10	**Dreamland**	Nicholas Sparks	Random House	9780593449554	7,282
10	8	**Verity**	Colleen Hoover	Grand Central	9781538739723	6,903
11	12	**Desert Star**	Michael Connelly	Little, Brown	9780316485654	6,493
12	14	**Triple Cross**	James Patterson	Little, Brown	9780316499187	5,909
13	11	**Our Missing Hearts**	Celeste Ng	Penguin Press	9780593492543	5,400
14	16	**Tom Clancy: Red Winter**	Marc Cameron	Putnam	9780593422755	5,231
15	3	**Babel**	R. F. Kuang	Harper Voyager	9780063021426	5,158
16	–	**The Villa**	Rachel Hawkins	St. Martin's	9781250280015	4,754
17	42	**Remarkably Bright Creatures**	Shelby Van Pelt	Ecco	9780063204157	4,564
18	13	**A World of Curiosities**	Louise Penny	Minotaur	9781250145291	4,433
19	18	**Going Rogue**	Janet Evanovich	Atria	9781668003053	4,390
20	–	**Sam**	Allegra Goodman	Dial	9780593447819	4,253

Hardcover Frontlist Nonfiction

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	1	**The Light We Carry**	Michelle Obama	Crown	9780593237465	25,963
2	2	**I'm Glad My Mom Died**	Jennette McCurdy	Simon & Schuster	9781982185824	18,549
3	6	**Faith Still Moves Mountains**	Harris Faulkner	Broadside	9780063225930	9,880
4	13	**Good Boundaries and Goodbyes**	Lysa TerKeurst	Thomas Nelson	9781400211760	9,459
5	4	**Go-to Dinners**	Ina Garten	Clarkson Potter	9781984822789	9,224
6	5	**Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible Thing**	Matthew Perry	Flatiron	9781250866448	8,000
7	23	**PlantYou**	Carleigh Bodrug	Hachette Go	9780306923043	7,323
8	8	**The Noom Mindset**	–	Simon Element	9781982194291	5,354
9	10	**Fast Like a Girl**	Mindy Pelz	Hay House	9781401969929	5,319
10	–	**Finding the Way**	Cap Treeger	Greenleaf	9781626349117	4,820
11	24	**Never Finished**	David Goggins	Lionscrest	9781544534084	4,444
12	11	**Lighter**	Yung Pueblo	Harmony	9780593233177	4,362
13	27	**Smitten Kitchen Keepers**	Deb Perelman	Knopf	9780593318782	4,286
14	7	**And There Was Light**	Jon Meacham	Random House	9780553393965	4,177
15	16	**The Revolutionary**	Stacy Schiff	Little, Brown	9780316441117	4,055
16	–	**Myth America**	Kruse/Zelizer	Basic	9781541601390	4,029
17	21	**Healing Through Words**	Rupi Kaur	Andrews McMeel	9781524873264	4,018
18	3	**Financial Feminist**	Tori Dunlap	Dey Street	9780063260269	3,933
19	19	**The Stories We Tell**	Joanna Gaines	Harper Select	9781400333875	3,869
20	18	**Half Baked Harvest Every Day**	Tieghan Gerard	Clarkson Potter	9780593232552	3,770

LW: rank last week

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Mass Market Frontlist

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	3	**Rich Dad Poor Dad**	Robert T. Kiyosaki	Plata	9781612681139	7,621
2	2	**Desperation in Death**	J.D. Robb	St. Martin's	9781250849717	6,534
3	6	**High Stakes**	Danielle Steel	Dell	9781984821737	6,390
4	9	**Preacher's Purge**	Johnstone/Johnstone	Pinnacle	9780786049868	5,180
5	17	**21st Birthday**	Patterson/Paetro	Grand Central	9781538752869	4,354
6	8	**A Gambling Man**	David Baldacci	Grand Central	9781538719657	3,717
7	47	**Smoke Screen**	Sandra Brown	Pocket	9781982187958	2,850
8	16	**The Judge's List**	John Grisham	Vintage	9780593157831	2,734
9	4	**Wilderness Hunt**	Lisa Phillips	Love Inspired Suspense	9781335587442	2,620
10	19	**Steal**	Patterson/Roughan	Grand Central	9781538720752	2,604
11	5	**The Mysterious Amish Nanny**	Patrice Lewis	Love Inspired	9781335585431	2,584
12	18	**Invisible**	Danielle Steel	Dell	9781984821607	2,575
13	48	**Navy Grooms**	Debbie Macomber	Mira	9780778386803	2,428
14	7	**Her Forgotten Life**	Maggie K. Black	Love Inspired Suspense	9781335587459	2,427
15	27	**Remember Love**	Mary Balogh	Berkley	9780593438145	2,272
16	12	**Retribution at the Ranch**	Lenora Worth	Love Inspired Suspense	9781335587466	2,167
17	10	**Her Unlikely Amish Protector**	Jocelyn McClay	Love Inspired	9781335585424	2,161
18	51	**Secret Getaway**	Nora Roberts	Silhouette	9781335425997	2,140
19	13	**Framing the Marshal**	Sharee Stover	Love Inspired Suspense	9781335587480	2,055
20	29	**Bad Days for Bad Men**	Johnstone/Johnstone	Pinnacle	9780786049998	2,048

Trade Paperback Frontlist

RANK	LW	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	1	**It Starts with Us**	Colleen Hoover	Atria	9781668001226	62,846
2	2	**The January 6 Report**	–	Harper	9780063315501	39,275
3	3	**Reminders of Him**	Colleen Hoover	Montlake	9781542025607	21,422
4	5	**Things We Never Got Over**	Lucy Score	Bloom	9781945631832	15,668
5	–	**Loathe to Love You**	Ali Hazelwood	Berkley	9780593437803	14,546
6	–	**The Maid**	Nita Prose	Ballantine	9780593356173	13,479
7	4	**The January 6th Report**	–	Celadon	9781250877529	12,393
8	6	**Twisted Love**	Ana Huang	Bloom	9781728274867	10,028
9	–	**Bible Prophecy**	Tsarfati/Stagner	Harvest Prophecy	9780736987240	9,940
10	10	**Maybe Now**	Colleen Hoover	Atria	9781668013342	8,462
11	11	**Book Lovers**	Emily Henry	Berkley	9780593334836	8,400
12	18	**The Housemaid**	Freida McFadden	Grand Central	9781538742570	7,167
13	13	**Never Finished**	David Goggins	Lioncrest	9781544534077	7,162
14	9	**A Court of Silver Flames**	Sarah J. Maas	Bloomsbury	9781635577990	7,081
15	16	**Every Summer After**	Carley Fortune	Berkley	9780593438534	6,955
16	–	**Hour Game**	David Baldacci	Grand Central	9781538709580	6,562
17	8	**Twisted Games**	Ana Huang	Bloom	9781728274874	6,395
18	7	**Jujutsu Kaisen, Vol. 18**	Gege Akutami	Viz	9781974734399	5,767
19	–	**Road of Bones**	Christopher Golden	Griffin	9781250875181	5,435
20	15	**Love on the Brain**	Ali Hazelwood	Berkley	9780593336847	5,239

LW: rank last week

Children's Bestsellers | JAN. 1–7, 2023

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Children's Frontlist Fiction

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	**The Stolen Heir**	Holly Black	Little, Brown	9780316592703	29,052
2	**Moon Rising** (Wings of Fire Graphic Novel #6)	Sutherland/Holmes	Graphix	9781338730890	21,815
3	**Nick and Charlie** (Heartstopper)	Alice Oseman	Scholastic Press	9781338885101	17,458
4	**Collaborations** (Cat Kid Comic Club #4)	Dav Pilkey	Graphix	9781338846621	15,524
5	**Diper Överlöde** (Diary of a Wimpy Kid #17)	Jeff Kinney	Amulet	9781419762949	15,342
6	**Mary Anne's Bad Luck Mystery** (The Baby-Sitters Club Graphic Novel #13)	Martin/Cheng	Graphix	9781338616101	13,121
7	**Karen's Birthday** (Baby-Sitters Little Sister Graphic Novel #6)	Martin/Farina	Graphix	9781338762587	12,832
8	**Bluebird**	Sharon Cameron	Scholastic	9781338355970	6,590
9	**Good Girl, Bad Blood**	Holly Jackson	Ember	9781984896438	6,375
10	**The Hawthorne Legacy**	Jennifer Lynn Barnes	Little, Brown	9780316105187	5,050
11	**Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**	Rowling/Kay/Packer	Scholastic	9780545791434	4,783
12	**Better Than the Movies**	Lynn Painter	Simon & Schuster	9781534467637	4,120
13	**The First to Die at the End**	Adam Silvera	Quill Tree	9780063240803	4,015
14	**The Final Gambit**	Jennifer Lynn Barnes	Little, Brown	9780316370950	3,960
15	**Jessi's Secret Language** (The Baby-Sitters Club Graphic Novel #12)	Martin/Chau	Graphix	9781338616071	3,923
16	**Highly Suspicious and Unfairly Cute**	Talia Hibbert	Joy Revolution	9780593482353	3,831
17	**When You Trap a Tiger**	Tae Keller	Yearling	9781524715731	3,709
18	**Long Live the Pumpkin Queen: Tim Burton's the Nightmare Before Christmas**	Shea Ernshaw	Disney Press	9781368069601	3,569
19	**Five Survive**	Holly Jackson	Delacorte	9780593374160	3,546
20	**Jujutsu Kaisen: Summer of Ashes, Autumn of Dust**	Ballad Kitaguni	Viz Media	9781974732555	3,043
21	**Lightlark**	Alex Aster	Amulet	9781419760860	2,892
22	**Heartstopper Volume 4**	Alice Oseman	Graphix	9781338617559	2,819
23	**Five Nights at Freddy's: Fazbear Frights Graphic Novel Collection #1**	Scott Cawthon	Graphix	9781338792676	2,809
24	**Rodrick Rules** (Diary of a Wimpy Kid #2) (media tie-in)	Jeff Kinney	Amulet	9781419766992	2,801
25	**Submechanophobia** (Five Nights at Freddy's: Tales from the Pizzaplex #4)	Scott Cawthon	Scholastic	9781338851410	2,787

Children's Picture Books

RANK	TITLE	AUTHOR	IMPRINT	ISBN	UNITS
1	**You're My Little Cuddle Bug**	Edwards/Marshall	Silver Dolphin	9781684122585	16,601
2	**Reindeer In Here**	Reed/Yan	Simon Spotlight	9781665900133	14,696
3	**How the Grinch Stole Christmas!**	Dr. Seuss	Random House	9780394800790	14,234
4	**Little Blue Truck's Valentine**	Schertle/McElmurry	Clarion	9780358272441	13,553
5	**I Love You to the Moon and Back**	Amelia Hepworth	Tiger Tales	9781589255517	11,640
6	**The Very Hungry Caterpillar**	Eric Carle	Philomel	9780399226908	9,759
7	**My First I See You**	Eric Carle	Little Simon	9781534424548	8,887
8	**Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?**	Martin/Carle	Holt	9780805047905	8,257
9	**I Love You Like No Otter**	Rossner/Hanson	Sourcebooks Wonderland	9781728213743	7,727
10	**Happy Valentine's Day, Mouse!**	Numeroff/Bond	HarperFestival	9780061804328	6,992
11	**Goodnight Moon**	Brown/Hurd	HarperFestival	9780694003617	6,905
12	**Guess How Much I Love You**	McBratney/Jeram	Candlewick	9781536210637	6,667
13	**There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Rose!**	Colandro/Lee	Scholastic	9780545352239	5,539
14	**Chicka Chicka Boom Boom**	Martin/Archambault/Ehlert	Little Simon	9781442450707	5,408
15	**As Cool as It Gets**	John/Oswald	HarperCollins	9780063045422	5,234
16	**Love You Forever** (paper)	Munsch/McGraw	Firefly	9780920668375	5,065
17	**The Wonderful Things You Will Be**	Emily Winfield Martin	Random House	9780385376716	5,016
18	**Little Blue Truck's Christmas**	Schertle/McElmurry	Clarion	9780544320413	4,751
19	**Construction Site: You're Just Right**	Rinker/Ford	Chronicle	9781797204307	4,598
20	**Disney 5-Minute Christmas Stories**	–	Disney Press	9781484727416	4,545
21	**If Animals Kissed Good Night**	Paul/Walker	FSG	9780374300210	4,392
22	**Love You Forever** (board book)	Munsch/McGraw	Firefly	9780228101048	4,359
23	**I'll Love You Till the Cows Come Home**	Cristaldi/Litten	HarperFestival	9780062574220	4,296
24	**I Love You, Stinky Face**	McCourt/Moore	Scholastic	9780439635721	4,139
25	**Grumpy Monkey Valentine Gross-Out**	Lang/Lang	Random House Studio	9780593486924	4,051

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SPRING 2023

Comics & Graphic Novels Announcements

Welcome to our first-ever standalone comics announcements feature! With the format doing gangbuster business and the tremendous crossover between ages, genres, and other corners of pop culture, we thought it was time to expand our traditional preview into something of a one-stop shop for everything graphic coming up this spring and summer.

We have top 10 and longlist picks for middle grade, young adult, and adult readers, and a special section dedicated to the thriving manga scene. Elsewhere in the issue we profile *New Yorker* cartoonist Julia Wertz, whose graphic memoir *Impossible People* lands in May, and talk with Adam Bessie about *Going Remote*, his graphic memoir about his battle with cancer and teaching community college during the pandemic. On our cover is a self-portrait by Darrin Bell, the author and illustrator of *The Talk*, one of our 10 most anticipated titles for adults. Turn the page and see who else made the list. ***Happy reading!***

—Jonathan Segura, executive editor

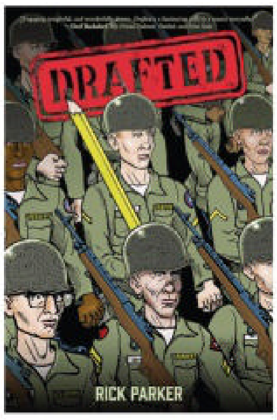
CATEGORIES

ADULT COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS	MIDDLE GRADE COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS	YOUNG ADULT COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS	MANGA
21	31	42	47

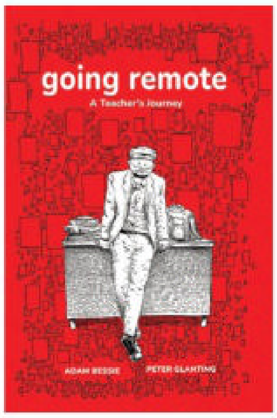
Adult Comics & Graphic Novels

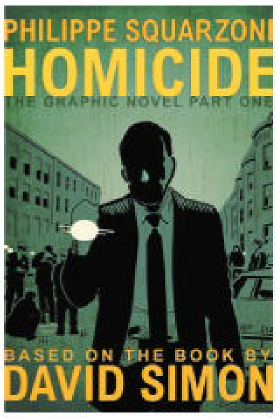
By Meg Lemke

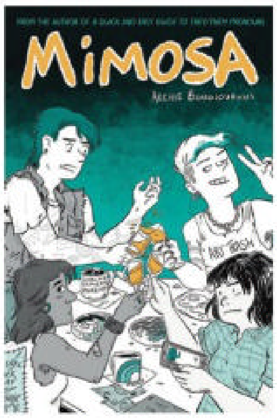
Spring is often when publishers take risks, and this season offers plenty to discover, including ambitious debut memoirs from gag cartoonists, weighty topics addressed with frank humor, and edgy sex comedy.

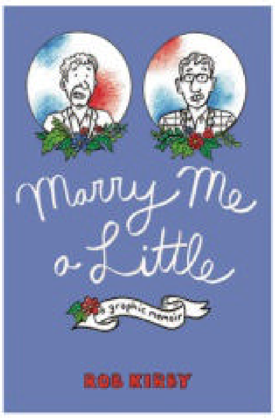


BENJI NATE
GIRL JUICE









TOP 10

Blood of the Virgin

Sammy Harkham. Pantheon, May 2 ($30, ISBN 978-0-593-31669-6)

L.A. Times Book Prize winner Harkham returns after 14 years to deliver a "panoramic period piece... thrumming with energy and painful insights," per *PW*'s star review, featuring a struggling filmmaker crashing through the grindhouse underground of 1970s Hollywood.

Drafted

Rick Parker. Abrams ComicArts, Apr. 11 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-6159-1)

Parker (Marvel's Beavis & Butthead series) looks back on his experiences as a reluctant young soldier drafted during the Vietnam War, revealing the fallout of forced conscription.

Girl Juice

Benji Nate. Drawn & Quarterly, May 23 ($24.95, ISBN 978-1-77046-663-0)

The webcomics provocateur presents her buzzy series starring a sex-crazed and catty clique of roommates. This one is NSFW.

Going Remote: A Teacher's Journey

Adam Bessie and Peter Glanting. Seven Stories and Censored Press, Feb. 7 ($18.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-64421-270-7)

After Covid upended the lives of students and teachers, community college professor (and cancer patient) Bessie brings readers inside the high-stakes national experiment of remote education.

Homicide: The Graphic Novel, Part 1

David Simon and Philippe Squarzoni. First Second, July 25 ($29.99, ISBN 978-1-250-62462-8)

The groundbreaking narrative of crime and consequence from the creator of HBO's *The Wire* goes graphic with Squarzoni (*Climate Changed*).

Impossible People: A Completely Average Recovery Story

Julia Wertz. Black Dog & Leventhal, May 9 ($30, ISBN 978-0-7624-6825-6)

New Yorker cartoonist and urban adventurer Wertz combines her trademark curmudgeonly wit with fresh vulnerability in a recovery story that takes on themes usually not explored so funnily.

The Man in the McIntosh Suit

Rina Ayuyang. Drawn & Quarterly, May 2 ($22.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-77046-666-1)

An immigrant Filipino farmworker follows a mystery from the fields to San Francisco nightclubs in 1929 in this noir-styled historical from Eisner nominee Ayuyang.

Marry Me a Little: A Graphic Memoir

Rob Kirby. Graphic Mundi, Feb. 21 ($21.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63779-039-7)

Ignatz winner Kirby's "intimate and urgent exploration of what marriage means perfectly argues how the personal is profoundly political," per *PW*'s review.

Mimosa

Archie Bongiovanni. Surely, Feb. 7 ($29.95, ISBN 978-1-77046-568-8)

Fans of Bongiovanni's punky *Grease Bats* comics will rally to this boozy brunch set of stories of queer friends transitioning from the club scene to careers and parenthood.

The Talk

Darrin Bell. Holt, June 6 ($27.99, ISBN 978-1-250-80514-0)

Syndicated cartoonist and Pulitzer winner Bell explores in a graphic memoir the conversations that Black parents are forced to have with their children about police violence.

ABRAMS COMICARTS

The Bomb: The Weapon That Changed the World by Didier Alcante, Laurent-Frédéric Bollée, and Denis Rodier, trans. by Ivanka Hahnenberger (July 11, $29.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-5209-4). This graphic narrative history of the development and deployment of the atomic bomb circles the blast site of the first weapon of mass destruction.

ANDREWS MCMEEL

Why Are You Like This? An Artbymoga Comic Collection by Meg Adams (Mar. 7, $16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5248-7426-1) brings together Adams's webcomics on the everyday humor she finds in her marriage-of-opposites to the reserved Carson, with bonus antics by the pair's pups.

AVERY HILL

Big Ugly by Ellice Weaver (June 22, $19.95, ISBN 978-1-910395-66-0) After character Mel invites her brother, who is having a tough time, to move in as a roommate, she must deal with the emotional consequences.

BEACON

Under the Banner of King Death: Pirates of the Atlantic, a Graphic Novel by David Lester et al. (Feb. 7, $17.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-8070-2398-3) storms the high seas with a historical graphic novel based on scholar Marcus Rediker's research on early-18th-century pirates, following the adventures of a diverse mutinous crew.

BIRDCAGE BOTTOM

The Cola Pop Creemees: Opening Act by Desmond Reed (Apr. 1, $15 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-957795-20-1) follows the ups and downs of the members of a fictional psychedelic band, touching on love, loss, and addiction, among other shenanigans.

CHRONICLE

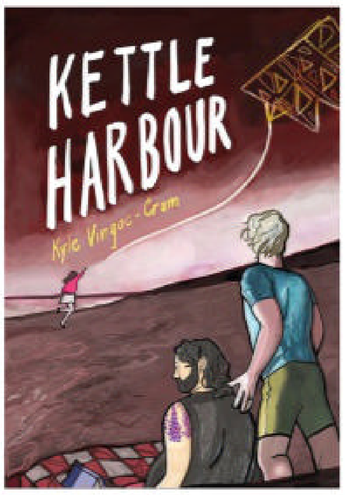
The Jewish Deli: An Illustrated History of the Chosen Food by Ben Nadler (May 2, $24.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-79720-524-3) scoots readers up to the counter of the corner store to sample the delectable offerings of Jewish cuisine (think bagels, schmears, soups, and treats) while illuminating the cultural history of the deli.

CHRONICLE PA

Why You'll Never Find the One: And Why It Doesn't Matter by Sarah Akinterinwa (Feb. 7, $19.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-79722-253-0) offers advice on dating (from romantic partners to taking oneself out to town) from a Black woman's perspective, with ample anecdotes, tips, and affirmations.

CONUNDRUM

Kettle Harbour by Kyle Vingoe-Cram (May 9, $25 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-77262-083-2), a debut graphic novel, delves into queer love and family dynamics, memory, and trauma, with an ensemble cast anchored by two cousins brought back together in their Nova Scotian coastal hometown.



DARK HORSE

Elixir by Frank Barbiere and Ricky Mammone (Mar. 29, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-50673-366-1) pits magic against technology in a futuristic fantasy world where the Druids try to save a secret elixir that could keep their culture of mysticism from being taken over by corporations.

The Lonesome Hunters by Tyler Crook (Feb. 8, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-50673-101-8) pairs a rusty senior monster hunter with a youngster as the duo fight off all manner of evil creatures and learn from each other in unexpected ways.

DC COMICS

Failsafe (Batman #1) by Chip Zdarsky and Jorge Jiménez (Mar. 21, $24.99, ISBN 978-1-77951-993-1) starts the dark knight saga up again from a series of bad dreams that Bruce Wayne can't shake, as a villain from the past resurfaces. 80,000-copy announced first printing.

Nightmare Country (The Sandman Universe #1) by James Tynion IV and Lisandro Estherren (Apr. 4, $29.99, ISBN 978-1-77951-841-5). Tynion IV takes on a new series arc within Neil Gaiman's The Sandman universe, as the Corinthian stalks the earth tracking a monster beyond the progeny of lord Dream. 60,000-copy announced first printing.

DRAWN & QUARTERLY

Brooklyn's Last Secret by Leslie Stein (Mar. 7, $29.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-77046-634-0). A struggling offbeat rock band goes on tour from Brooklyn hoping to get discovered in this outing from the musician and *L.A. Times* Book Prize winner.

Where I'm Coming From by Barbara Brandon-Croft (Feb. 7, $29.95, ISBN 978-1-77046-568-8) collects the cartoon strip series published 1989–2005 by Croft, who was the first Black woman cartoonist with a nationally syndicated newspaper comic, capturing her humorous and insightful takes on everyday life's ups and downs.

ENEMY

StewDio: The Naphic Grovel ARTrilogy of Chuck D by Chuck D (June 6, $49.95, ISBN 978-1-63614-100-8) collects three volumes of illustrated journals by the rapper that combine takes on the Covid pandemic and shifting American political landscape with insider glimpses on Public Enemy's continuing activism.

FANTAGRAPHICS

Elise and the New Resistance by Tardi and Dominique Grange, trans. by Jenna Allen (July 18, $29.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-755-2), finds the cartoonist

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who has been lauded for noir and war comics turning to the story of a pop singer and activist in Paris who fights for peace and justice in the late 1960s.

The Heavy Bright by Cathy Malkasian (Mar. 28, $39.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-692-0). Malkasian follows *Percy Gloom* with another skewed fantasy, here imagining a harmonious land corrupted by the appearance of ominous eggs that evil men hoard to maintain power—until two young women who fall in love challenge their reign.

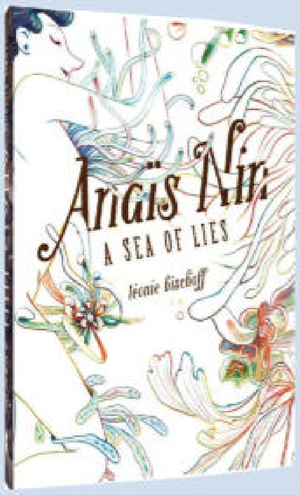
Hogbook and Lazer Eyes by Maria Bamford and Scott Marvel Cassidy (May 16, $19.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-773-6) depicts the romance of the comedian and actor Bamford (*Lady Dynamite!*) and artist Cassidy as told through the viewpoint of the couple's pet pugs. 25,000-copy announced first printing.

WHAT A LIFE

Graphic biographies are accessible entry points and often take innovative or unusual perspectives in drawing the lives of their subjects. This season brings an array of illuminated portraits covering pugilist Jack Johnson, Princess Diana, the rock band Queen, and more.

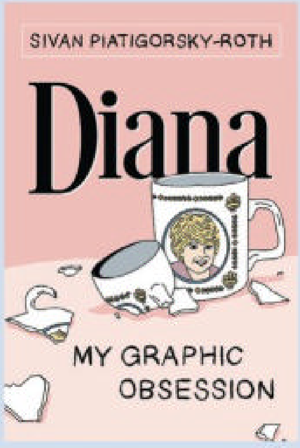
Anaïs Nin: A Sea of Lies
Léonie Bischoff, trans. by Jenna Allen. Fantagraphics, June 1 ($29.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-759-0)

Winner of the audience favorite prize at Angoulême, Bischoff's biography of the literary erotica scribe of the 1920s and '30s depicts in swirling colored pencil drawings her blossoming as a writer along as well as her professed dalliances with paramours including author Henry Miller and her own therapist.



Black & White: The Rise and Fall of Bobby Fischer
Julian Voloj and Wagner Willain. Abrams ComicArts, Apr. 4 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-5986-40)

Voloj and Willain set out to capture the tumultuous life of chess prodigy Bobby Fischer (1943–2008), who took the global spotlight when he bested the Soviet world champ during the height of the Cold War, but later devolved into paranoia and mental illness.



Diana: My Graphic Obsession
Sivan Piatigorsky-Roth. Street Noise, May 2 ($19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-951491-22-2)

An autistic cartoonist fixates on the life and death of the princess of Wales in this unusual, often wordless blend of a graphic memoir and royal biography.

Last on His Feet: Jack Johnson and the Battle of the Century
Youssef Daoudi and Adrian Matejka. Liveright, Feb. 21 ($29.99, ISBN 978-1-63149-558-8)

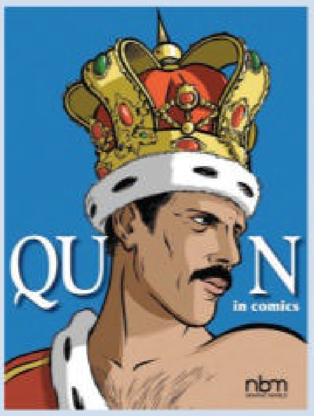
Daoudi (*Monk!*) partners with poet and Pulitzer finalist Matejka for a winning biography of Black heavyweight champion Jack Johnson. It's focused on his 1910 fight against the "Great White Hope," James Jeffries, and lands as a "big brawl of a book that, like the greatest boxing matches, finds the poetry in the violence," per *PW*'s starred review.

Ms Davis: A Graphic Biography
Sybille Titeux de la Croix and Amazing Ameziane, trans. by Jenna Allen. Fantagraphics, Mar. 14 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-569-5)

Angela Davis, the 1970s activist and scholar who made the FBI's most wanted list, and her many fellow travelers in communist circles of the period are drawn in this reimagining by Ameziane (*Muhammad Ali*).

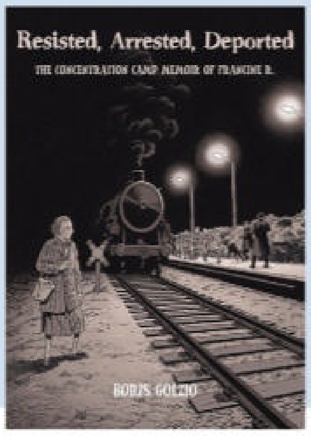
Queen in Comics!
Emmanuel Marie and Sophie Blitman, trans. by Christopher Pope. NBM, May 2 ($27.99, ISBN 978-1-68112-311-0)

Led by the flamboyant iconoclast Freddie Mercury, the hit band Queen put out such classics as "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "We Are the Champions" in the 1970s and '80s. The group's antics on and off stage are captured in this comics tribute.



Resisted, Arrested, Deported: The Concentration Camp Memoir of Francine R.
Boris Golzio. Dead Reckoning, June 2 ($24.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68247-891-2)

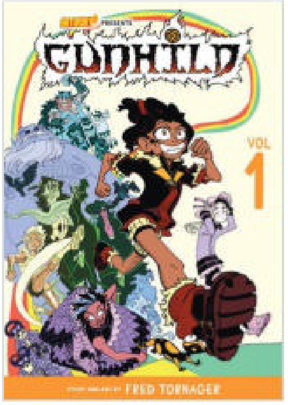
Golzio's graphic biography of a WWII concentration camp survivor is based on interviews with a French woman who, due to her family's politics and resistance to the Nazis, was arrested in 1944 by the Gestapo and deported to Germany. —M.L.


Resisted, Arrested, Deported
THE CONCENTRATION CAMP MEMOIR OF FRANCINE R.
BORIS GOLZIO

Saturday AM Doubles Down on Manga for All

Now in its second year, the brand's publishing partnership with The Quarto Group continues to bring inclusive, global manga to the masses

Frederick L. Jones, founder of the manga brand Saturday AM, considers himself a devout fan of the genre, having followed manga for decades. And while Jones lauds the inventiveness, dynamism, and character designs of manga, he has long sensed a missed opportunity for more diversity in the art form. For Jones, more inclusive manga is a natural evolution.



SAIGAMI
2
Seny

"I think of manga as an institution and visual language for people around the world," Jones says. "Likewise, diversity is not an alien or quirky concept to them; rather, it's a *reality*. Many modern artists see no distinction in their works being considered 'manga,' whether the main character is African, Latin American, Indian, and so on."

This desire to celebrate and promote global manga led Jones to launch Saturday AM digital manga in 2013. Jones says it's a "brand that operates in the spirit of the Japanese manga but with a focus on characters, creators, and settings that could hail from anywhere and feature anyone."

And with its ongoing publishing partnership with The Quarto Group launched in 2022, Saturday AM is reaching even more readers through a series of manga titles now published in print format. Under its art and design imprint, Rockport Publishers, Quarto published 10 Saturday AM titles in 2022 across seven series—with an additional 10 to 12 titles coming every year. "There is a natural competitiveness to all the series," Jones says.

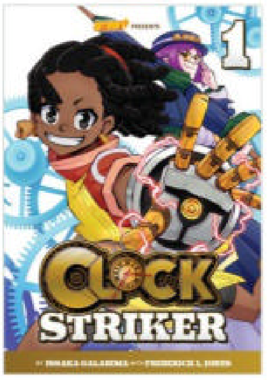
The Rockport editions, which are slightly bigger than a traditional volume of Japanese manga, are mostly in black and white and will include select color pages. *Clock Striker, Volume 1* by Jones along with Nigerien Issaka Galadima is a Saturday AM standout coming from Quarto this February. The book follows a Black female lead hero, Cast, in her quest to become a member of the SMITHS, the legendary warrior engineers.

From Nigerian author and artist Odunze Oguguo—aka YouTube's Whyt Manga—the Apple Black series takes place in a fantasy world in which people gain magical abilities from a fruit called "Black." *Apple Black, Volume 3* will publish in May of this year. Oguguo too grew up reading manga and was particularly drawn to its cinematic storytelling style, but he wanted to see the art form broadened. "As a Nigerian, I wanted to bring many ideas to the manga category," he says, "so I designed my series to support various cultures, mythologies, and types of magic."

Odunze Oguguo

APPLE BLACK
3
ODUNZE OGUGUO

Issaka Galadima, illustrator of *Clock Striker*



Also coming out this year are *Saigami, Volume 2* by Hungarian artist Seny and *Gunhild* by Colombian artist Fred Tornager. Both feature fantastical settings with multilayered characters. More upcoming releases include *Soul Beat, Volume 1* by Morganne Walker, *Underground, Volume 1* by J. R. De Bard, and *Henshin!, Volume 1* by Bon Idle, a kaiju-light story featuring a queer boy navigating his new role as a superhero.

Frederick L Jones, founder of Saturday AM and author of *Clock Striker*

Through its successful partnership with The Quarto Group, Saturday AM is representing a growing body of diverse artists. It's all in line with Jones's original vision of creating ever-expanding, truly global manga. "From our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters to those who are differently abled, have nonstandard body types, or have darker skin tones, everyone should be able to see themselves in manga," he says. "It's been rewarding to see that people of *all* backgrounds have embraced many of our characters and creators as well as our overall mission."

> "Everyone should be able to see themselves in manga."
>
> **— Frederick L. Jones**

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FIRST SECOND

The He-Man Effect: How American Toymakers Sold You Your Childhood by Brian "Box" Brown (July 11, $26.99, ISBN 978-1-250-26140-3) turns the clock back to the 1980s, when shows like *He-Man* and *GI Joe* tied to toys and products began to dominate childhood culture.

GRAPHIC MUNDI

Nuking Alaska: Notes of an Atomic Fugitive by Peter Dunlap-Shohl (June 6, $19.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63779-047-2). Dunlap-Shohl (*My Degeneration*) recalls growing up during the Cold War in Alaska, where nuclear threat and close-call disasters were ever-present facts of life.

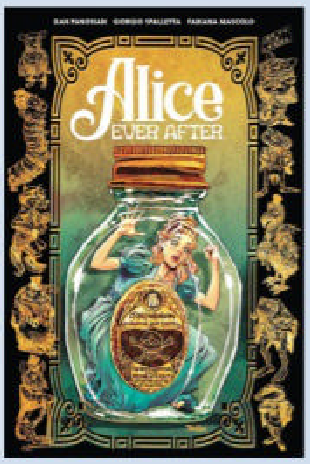
COMICS REPLAY

These adaptations borrow, remix, and refresh story lines from classic novels or contemporary film and television.

Alice Ever After

Dan Panosian and Giorgio Spalletta. Boom! Studios, Feb. 21 ($16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68415-885-0)

Grown-up Alice still taps into Wonderland when she wants to get away from reality, but getting there requires ever-more dangerous feats (including criminal behavior) to trigger her transformation in this gritty sequel that's far from a fairy tale.



Blade Runner 2039

Mike Johnson and Andres Guinaldo. Titan Comics, June 20 ($17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-78773-844-7)

There's a new breed of approved, perfectly behaved replicants out in 2039, but the older models are still hunted down in this first volume of the final arc featuring now ex–Blade Runner Ash.

The Children of Bathala: A Mythology Class Reunion

Arnold Arre. Tuttle, Mar. 21 ($16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-8048-5543-3)

The sequel to Arre's *The Mythology Class*, based on myths and monsters of the culture of the Philippines, brings a magical group of students back together.

Dune: The Waters of Kanly

Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson, and Francesco Mortarino. Boom! Studios, Feb. 14 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-68415-886-7).

Gurney Halleck of House Atreides sets out on a revenge-fueled side trip within the Dune universe to take down the Harkonnens, and runs afoul of the Space Guild.

ICON

Glass Half Empty by Rachael Smith (Apr. 11, $19.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-78578-897-0). Smith follows up *Wired Up Wrong* with more comics about mental health, told in wry shorts featuring anthropomorphized emotions like Barky, the loud doggy symbol for intrusive thoughts.

IDW

Arca by Van Jensen and Jesse Lonergan (July 11, $16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68405-998-0). Earth's wealthiest inhabitants jet off to space when apocalypse looms, tricking a group of teens into becoming servants on a new planet, until a young woman named Persephone defies their plots.

The Last Count of Monte Cristo

Ayize Jama-Everett and Tristan Roach. Megascope, Apr. 25 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-4550-8)

The planet has drowned in postapocalyptic climate change, and a betrayed count stews in imprisonment and plots revenge, updating Dumas's 19th-century novel in Afrofuturist style. 25,000-copy announced first printing.

Macbeth

K. Briggs. Avery Hill, July 27 ($22.95, ISBN 978-1-910395-73-8)

The regicide and witchery on display in this graphic adaptation run true to Shakespeare's script.

Mother Nature

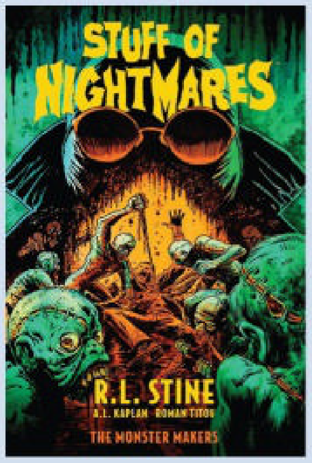
Jamie Lee Curtis, Russell Goldman, and Karl Stevens. Titan Comics, June 27 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-78773-913-0)

Actor Curtis scripts her debut graphic novel, adapting her eco-horror film that will release alongside the book, wherein a young woman sabotages an oil rig and unleashes dormant evil in New Mexico.

The Prophet: A Graphic Novel Adaptation

Kahlil Gibran, A. David Lewis, and Justin Renteria. Graphic Mundi, June 30 ($21.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63779-050-2)

Gibran's 1923 free verse poetic work that imagines an exiled prophet gets adapted into comics, in drawings that mimic Ottoman style of the period.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R.L. STINE
A.L. KAPLAN ROMAN TITOV
THE MONSTER MAKERS

Stuff of Nightmares: The Monster Makers

R.L. Stine and A.L. Kaplan. Boom! Studios, Apr. 11 ($16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68415-892-8)

That master of scares, Stine, returns with a skewered set of Frankenstein-family horror comics.

—M.L.

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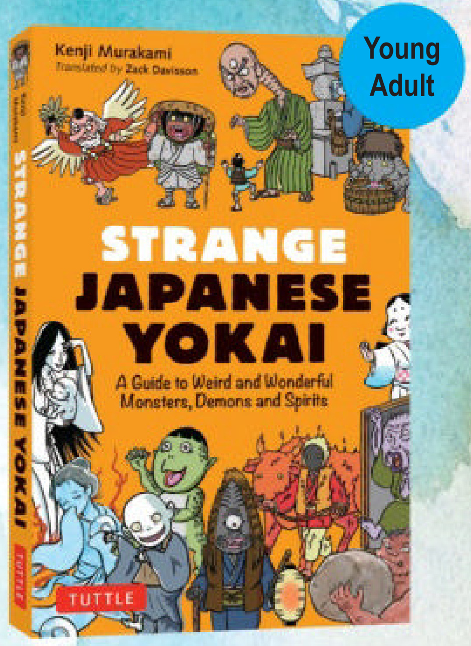
Young Adult
Kenji Murakami
Translated by Zack Davisson
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A Guide to Weird and Wonderful Monsters, Demons and Spirits
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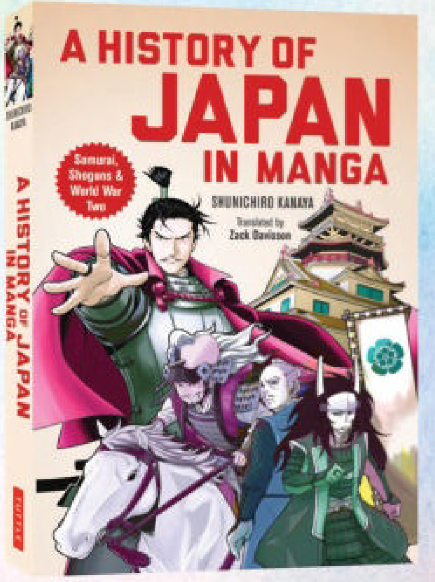
A HISTORY OF JAPAN IN MANGA
Samurai, Shoguns & World War Two
SHUNICHIRO KANAYA
Translated by Zack Davisson

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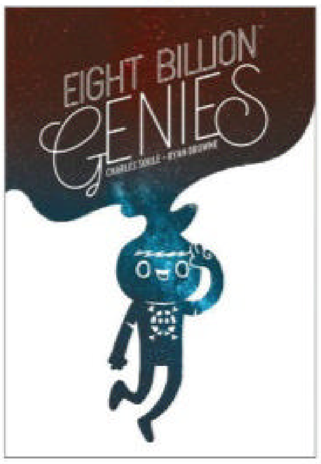
Available at ips@ingramcontent.com

Crashing by Matthew Klein and Morgan Beem (July 4, $16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68405-987-4). A doctor who treats superheroes gets caught in the middle when healthcare is denied to the superpowered. As just an ordinary human, dealing with her own struggle for sobriety, she stands up for superhuman rights.

IMAGE COMICS

Eight Billion Genies by Charles Soule and Ryan Browne (Mar. 21, $39.99, ISBN 978-1-5343-2353-7) plays out in interlinked comics stories the thought experiment of every person in the world getting one wish granted by a personal magic genie, and the spiraling chaos that ensues.


EIGHT BILLION GENIES
CHARLES SOULE • RYAN BROWNE

Love Everlasting by Tom King and Elsa Charretier (Feb. 21, $16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5343-2464-0). It's a never-ending romantic roller coaster for Joan, who is trapped in a melodrama-mystery genre. Just as high-stakes plots seem to reach a happy ending, she's whisked to another parallel world.

IRON CIRCUS COMICS

Lackadaisy by Tracy Butler (July 11, $20 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63899-103-8). In Prohibition-era Missouri, a cast of mobster cats and flapper kitties frequent a speakeasy run by the inimitable feline Mitzi May.

LEGENDARY

The Science of Ghosts by Lilah Sturges, El Garing, and Alitha Martinez (May 30, $23.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68116-086-3). A trans woman who can chat with ghosts solves paranormal mysteries but finds her relationships with living folks pose more trouble.

MAD CAVE

The Tiger's Tongue by Olivia Stephens and Diansakhu Banton-Perry (Feb. 1, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-952303-32-6) features a pair of princesses at odds in a fantasy land at war, as animal familiars and ancient prophecies guide their path.

MAGNETIC

Tao Bang by Daneil Pecqueur, Olivier Vatine, and Didier Cassegrain, trans. by Dan Christensen (Mar. 21, $24.99, ISBN 978-1-951719-70-8) sends a brothel owner and a knave on a quest to the Isle of Mermaids, to capture a siren—but the pirate Tao Bang presents a challenging foe.

MIT

The Phantom Scientist by Robin Cousin, trans. by Edward Gauvin (Feb. 21, $24.95, ISBN 978-0-262-04786-9) boots up a mystery based in computer science and set in an institute designed following the Fibonacci sequence where scientists go missing and the clue to solving odd happenings is embedded in systems theory.

NBM GRAPHIC

Darkly She Goes by Hubert and Vincent Mallié, trans. by L. Benson (June 20, $29.99, ISBN 978-1-68112-313-4) spins a classic fantasy tale with a banished knight seeking redemption and princesses with a complicated legacy.

NEW YORK REVIEW COMICS

The Gull Yettin by Joe Kessler (Mar. 28, $19.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68137-739-1) wordlessly depicts the plight of a young boy orphaned by a fire and saved by a magical gull that morphs into various new forms to help the boy find his way forward.

NOBROW

Vern, Custodian of the Universe by Tyrell Waiters (June 6, $20.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-913123-09-3).

When Vern moves back to his hometown in search of a fresh start, he takes a menial cleaning job at the mysterious corporation Quasar—and accidentally pulls the plug on a machine that opens up the multiverse.

ONI

Foretold (Hustle & Heart #1) by Heath Amodio et al. (Feb. 21, $21.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63715-099-3). Professor Derek Flynn keeps blacking out and coming to in waking dreams of disasters, which as the cycle restarts, seem like premonitions—and when the law starts hunting him down, he's not sure if he's a seer or a criminal.

OR BOOKS

Museum of Degenerates: Portraits of the American Grotesque by Eli Valley (July 18, $34.95, ISBN 978-1-68219-387-7). Valley delivers radical political cartoons and caricatures critiquing contemporary America and American society and media.

PANTHEON

Boys Weekend by Mattie Lubchansky (June 6, $28, ISBN 978-0-593-31671-9) brings together a trans woman and her old college buddies for a bachelor-party weekend trip that goes terribly wrong in this queer horror-humor hybrid from the editor of *The Nib*.

RADIATOR COMICS

Escape from the Great American Novel by Drew Lerman (Apr. 18, $20 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-9963989-3-0) collects the webcomic *Snake Creek* into a tale about books and bombs, as friends Roy and Dav decide whether to become activists or authors to save America.

SCRIBE US

Flic: The True Story of the Journalist Who Infiltrated the Police by Valentin Gendrot and Thierry Chavant, trans. by Frank Wynne (June 6, $25 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-957363-32-5) tells the story of a French journalist (drawn as a cat) who goes undercover with the Paris police and reports on the racism and corruption in the force, as well as difficulties officers face in the field.

SECRET ACRES

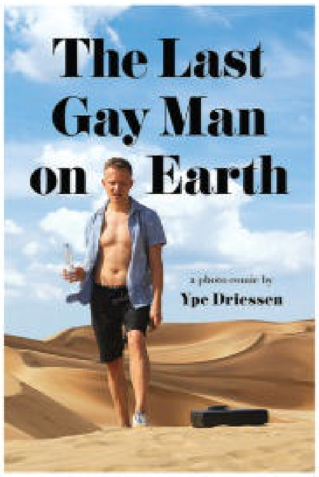
2AM Eternal by Erik Kostiuk Williams (May 30, $24.99 trade paper, ISBN 979-8-9855863-3-6) goes all night and into the dawn, detailing Toronto's queer nightlife through poster art, comics, and other ephemera, including the way these artifacts suddenly changed in the Covid era.

SEVEN STORIES

Prince in a Pastry Shop by Marek Bienczyk and Joanna Concejo, trans. by Benjamin Paloff (Apr. 18, $22.95, ISBN 978-1-64421-284-4) weaves a fable for adults in picture book style, where the Not-So-Little-Prince and Prickly Pear get together to eat some treats and wonder together over the fleeting nature of happiness.

SILVER SPROCKET

The Sucker by Elle Shivers (Apr. 26, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 979-88-86200-18-8) reunites a marine biologist and a photographer who knew each other back when, and suddenly find themselves on an expedition to a remote island in the Philippines.



STREET NOISE

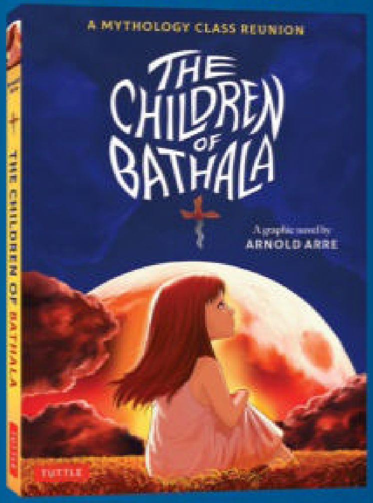
The Last Gay Man on Earth by Ype Driessen, trans. by Lenny Kouwenberg (June 6, $21.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-951491-23-9). Ype's afraid to fly, but his boyfriend wants to take a trip. Then things get weird when a robot vacuum starts telling its side of the story.

Nervosa by Hayley Gold (Apr. 11, $21.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-951491-24-6) opens up the experience of living with an eating disorder and the challenges of navigating family and a healthcare system that doesn't seem to understand how to treat those suffering.

SURELY

Grand Slam Romance by Ollie Hicks and Emma Oosterhous (May 23, $24.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-5801-0) plays out a

Immerse yourself in high-stakes adventures set in the Philippines!



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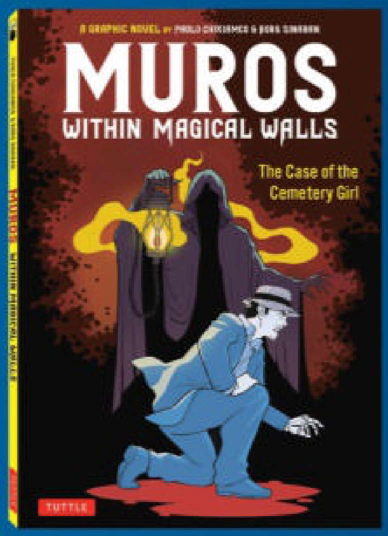

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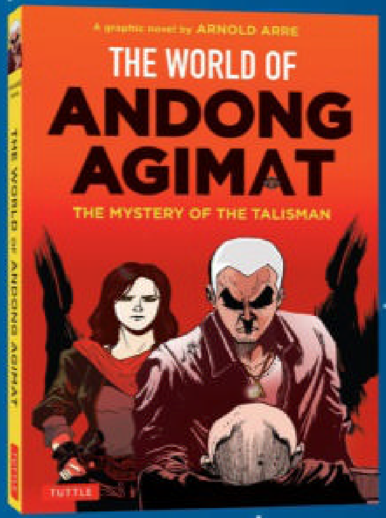

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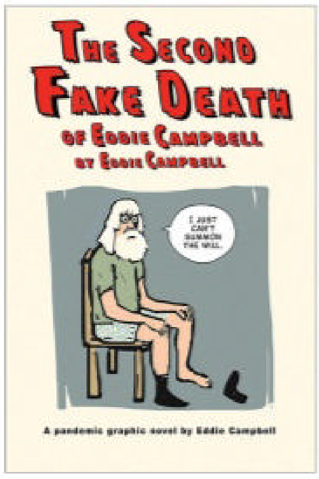
love story between queer girl softball stars who dabble in magic on and off the field, with plenty of intrigue pitched between team politics, mystical practices, and secret smooching. 40,000-copy announced first printing.

TKO

The Witches of World War II by Paul Cornell and Valerie Burzo (Mar. 7, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-952203-18-3) blends real-life occult historical figures like Aleister Crowly and Wiccan Gerald Gardner into a fantastical plot involving a bevy of witches who conspire to stop Hitler by going after Rudolf Hess.

TOP SHELF

The Second Fake Death of Eddie Campbell & The Fate of the Artist by Eddie Campbell (July 11, $29.99, ISBN 978-1-60309-524-2) continues Campbell's introspective metafictional memoir style (including a deluxe reissue of *The Fate of the Artist*) with a Covid-era mystery story. Eddie's wife thinks he's been replaced by a masked fake, and mayhem ensues.


The Second Fake Death of Eddie Campbell
by Eddie Campbell
I just can't summon the will.
A pandemic graphic novel by Eddie Campbell

UNCIVILIZED BOOKS

Damnation Diaries by Peter Rostovsky (May 23, $24.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-941250-54-9) takes readers straight to hell to peek in on the sessions between tortured soul PKRx354 and the underworld's resident Freudian therapist—until a hell-bound terrorist act turns the satire topsy-turvy.

VAULT

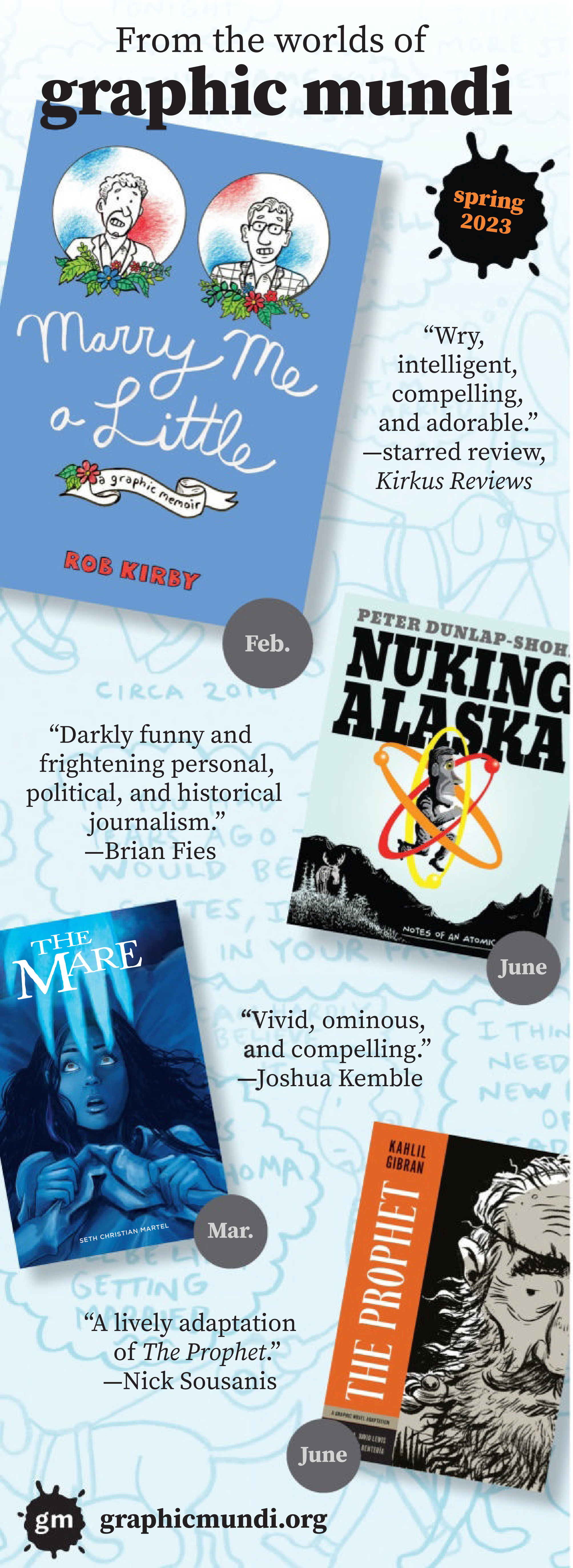
Out Beyond the Dust n' Dark (West of Sundown #1) by Tim Seeley, Aaron Campbell, and Jim Terry (Feb. 21, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63849-155-2). East Coast vampires strike out for New Mexico to flee monster-hunters, only to find that the place has already been claimed by rival supernatural creatures. 40,000-copy announced first printing.

WEBTOON UNSCROLLED

Everything Is Fine by Mike Birchall (May 16, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-990259-77-7) collects the online comic where round-headed homogenous denizens of a shiny suburb cheerfully accept constant surveillance, thought police, and uncanny events, until one couple starts to break the facade.

WEST MARGIN

Fifty States in Forty-Five Days: How to Be in a Band, Go on Tour, and Completely Lose Your Mind by Elizabeth Jancewicz and Eric Stevenson (May 23, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5131-3924-1) presents comics dispatches from *Touring Test* webcomic's Jancewicz and Stevenson's band, Pocket Vinyl, as they undertake a seemingly impossible tour to play all 50 states in fewer than 50 days.


From the worlds of
graphic mundi

spring 2023

Marry Me a Little — a graphic memoir — Rob Kirby
Feb.
"Wry, intelligent, compelling, and adorable." —starred review, *Kirkus Reviews*

Peter Dunlap-Shohl — Nuking Alaska — Notes of an Atomic
June
"Darkly funny and frightening personal, political, and historical journalism." —Brian Fies

The Mare — Seth Christian Martel
Mar.
"Vivid, ominous, and compelling." —Joshua Kemble

Kahlil Gibran — The Prophet
June
"A lively adaptation of *The Prophet*." —Nick Sousanis

gm graphicmundi.org

Middle Grade Comics & Graphic Novels

By Meg Lemke

This spring sees the debut graphic memoir from picture book star Dan Santat, the return of phenoms Jerry Craft and Nathan Hale, and a diverse bevy of up-and-comers, such as Stephanie Rodriguez, for young readers to discover.

TOP 10

Doodles from the Boogie Down
Stephanie Rodriguez. Kokila, Apr. 25 ($20.99, ISBN 978-0-451-48065-1)
Rodriguez's debut follows a Dominican eighth grader who applies to join Fame (aka New York City's La Guardia High School) and navigates the high-stakes admissions process against her mom's wishes. Ages 9–12.

A First Time for Everything
Dan Santat. First Second, Feb. 28 ($14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-85104-8)
Caldecott Medalist Santat gets into the graphic memoir game, recalling his junior high class trip to Europe, where he gets teased but meets the delights of a new world. Ages 10–14.

Hoops
Matt Tavares. Candlewick, Mar. 14 ($22.99, ISBN 978-1-5362-0136-9)
Set in 1975 Indiana, Tavares's debut dramatizes through the story of an underfunded girls' basketball team the fight for equity in school sports that resulted in Title IX. Ages 8–12.

Junior High (Tegan and Sara #1)
Tegan Quin, Sara Quin, and Tillie Walden. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, May 30 ($14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-374-31302-9)
Eisner winner Walden draws indie-pop-darling twins Tegan and Sara's tales of their tweens. There couldn't be a more winning combo for young comics fans (and hipster parents). Ages 10–14.

Lo and Behold
Wendy Mass and Gabi Mendez. Random House Graphic, May 2 ($13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-593-17962-8)
Addie's not out to make friends when her dad's summer gig drags her across the country, but when Mateo invites her to play with a virtual reality headset, her mind opens. Ages 10–14.

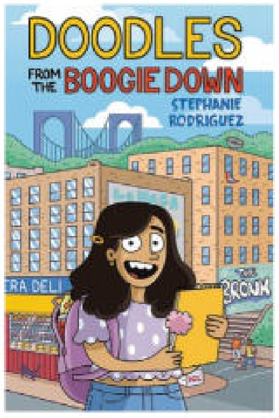
The Mighty Bite
Nathan Hale. Amulet, Apr. 4 ($14.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-6553-7)
Hale (the Hazardous Tales series) turns from true histories to truly ridiculous prehistoric antics with this buddy story of a trilobite and an ambulatory whale who angle to make it big online. Ages 7–10.

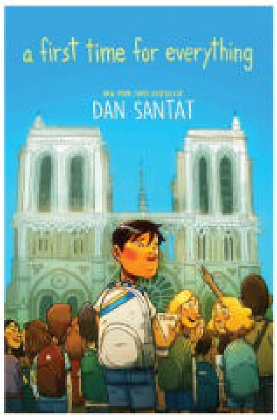
The Ojja-Wojja
Magdalene Visaggio and Jenn St-Onge. HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray, Mar. 7 ($13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-285242-7)
Visaggio pairs up with fellow queer comics indie starlet St-Onge to spice up an eighth-grade friendship triangle with ghosts and demon summoning. Ages 10 and up.

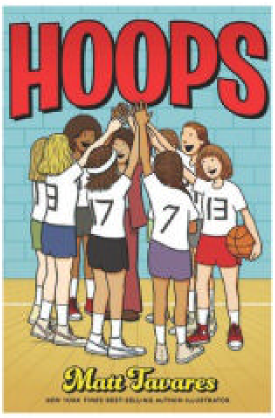
Out There
Seaerra Miller. Little, Brown, June 27 ($12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-316-59187-4)
The dad-daughter bonding road trip trope gets a cool twist: Julia's father believes he was abducted by aliens, and the pair are off to Roswell, N.Mex., to commune with his kind. Ages 8–12.

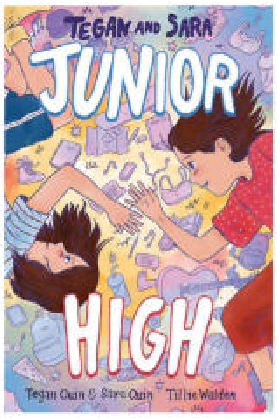
Parachute Kids
Betty C. Tang. Graphix, Apr. 4 ($12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-338-83268-6)
Drawing from her life, Tang captures the struggle of an immigrant family when Feng-Li's parents return to Taiwan, leaving her siblings in California to set up home alone. Ages 9–12.

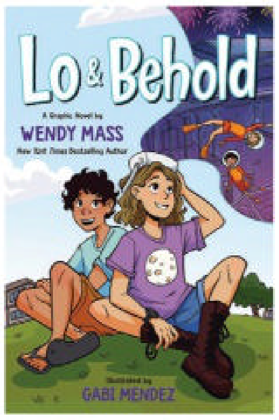
School Trip
Jerry Craft. Quill Tree, Apr. 4 ($14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-288553-1)
New Kid fans will line up to hop on the school bus in this newest volume in Craft's bestselling Newbery Medal– and Coretta Scott King Award–winning series. Ages 8–12.

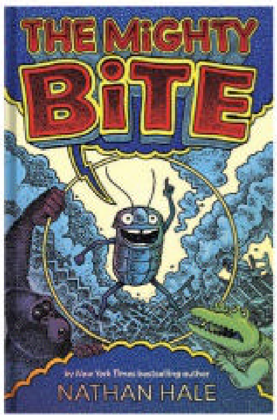

DOODLES FROM THE BOOGIE DOWN
STEPHANIE RODRIGUEZ

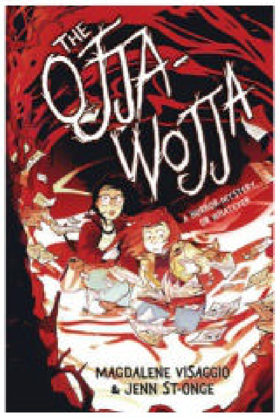

a first time for everything
DAN SANTAT

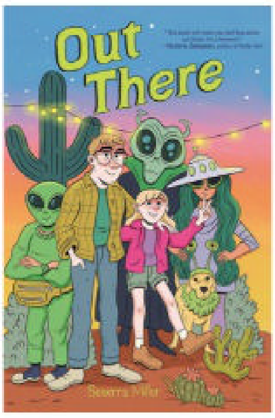

HOOPS
Matt Tavares

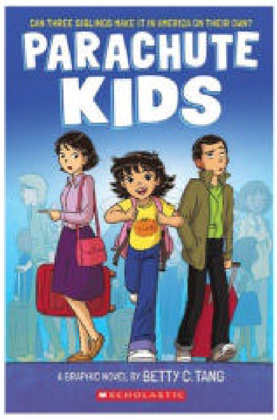

TEGAN AND SARA
JUNIOR HIGH
Tegan Quin & Sara Quin Tillie Walden

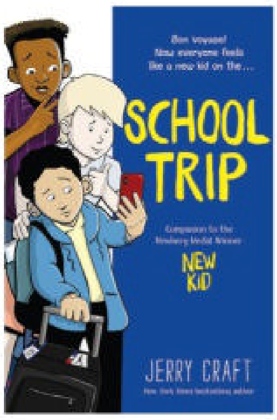

Lo & Behold
WENDY MASS
GABI MENDEZ


THE MIGHTY BITE
NATHAN HALE


THE OJJA-WOJJA
MAGDALENE VISAGGIO
& JENN ST-ONGE




PARACHUTE KIDS
BETTY C. TANG
SCHOLASTIC


SCHOOL TRIP
NEW KID
JERRY CRAFT

AMULET

Danny Phantom: A Glitch in Time by Gabriela Epstein (July 18, $24.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-6054-9). Based on the supernatural-kids Netflix series, this graphic novel picks up where the screened finale left off, then hops the cast through time and space and across the ghost zone, as Danny Phantom faces off once again with Dark Danny. Ages 10–18.

ANDREWS MCMEEL

Ferrets from Planet Ferretonia! (Meems and Feefs #1) by Liza N. Cooper (July 25, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5248-7670-8). Alien ferret bros build a spaceship to sneak off planet Ferretonia, only to crash land on Earth and end up in an animal shelter—until a girl named Liza finds a way to speak their language. Ages 8–12.

Nancy Wins at Friendship by Olivia Jaimes (May 16, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5248-8092-7) packages a selection of funnies featuring the snarky heroine of the modernized webcomic *Nancy* designed to speak to the middle school set, including gags about remote learning and robotics club. Ages 8–12.

ATHENEUM

Misfit Mansion by Kay Davault (July 25, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-66590-307-3). Iris, who lives in a group house for abandoned monsters and mythical creatures, longs for a forever family. She's eager to escape when a human boy unlocks the magic sealing her and friends inside, but it turns out he has ill intentions. Ages 8–18.

THE MIRACLE SEED
MARTIN LEMELMAN

Wizkit: An Adventure Overdue by Tanya J. Scott (Apr. 4, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-66590-082-9). The cyclops kitty of a Wizard can magically create snacks and other fun, but Wizkit still gets bored. When a library book starts calling out (literally), Wizkit ventures out to the big world to return it. Ages 8–12.

CLARION

The Do-Over by Rodrigo Vargas and Coni Yovaniniz (May 23, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-358-39405-1). Mariana's dad doesn't respond to her pitches for how to better market his hair salon, so she and two new friends start a rival pop-up shop and style up do's for all the tweens in town. Ages 8–12.

Pebble and Wren by Chris Hallbeck (Apr. 11, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-358-54128-8) expands the webcomic into a graphic novel following the adventures of a little girl and her live-in monster, who needs tips on how to get along in the human world. Ages 8–12.

DARK HORSE

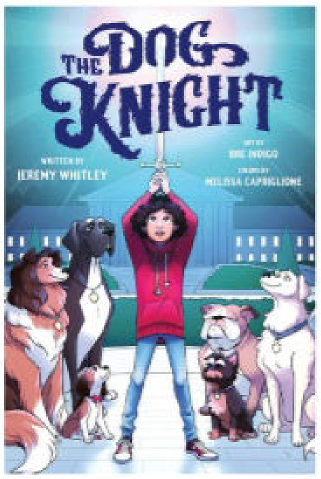
Hotel Rem by Zack Keller and Gabriele Bagnoli (Apr. 25, $14.99, ISBN 978-1-5067-3488-0). All the whimsical and weird figments of dreaming minds get to stay over at this boutique accommodation when people wake up, but one guest wants to ruin the harmonious balance. Ages 8–12.

EERDMANS

The Miracle Seed by Martin Lemelman (Mar. 28, $18.99, ISBN 978-0-8028-5590-9) bridges science and religion in a graphic novel based on the true story of Israeli scientists who revived and grew seeds from an ancient Judean date palm that had been dug up in the 1960s by archaeologists. Ages 8–14.

FEIWEL AND FRIENDS

The Dog Knight by Jeremy Whitley and Bre Indigo (May 16, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-75672-5). Frankie's a nonbinary middle schooler who one day protects a dog from bullies and gets swept into the world of the Pawtheon, where canine superheroes challenge Frankie to prove their worthiness to be heralded the Dog Knight. Ages 9–12.



FIRST SECOND

The Bawk-Ness Monster (Cryptid Kids #1) by Natalie Riess and Sara Goetter (June 27, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-83466-9). The other kids figure Penny just imagined that she was saved from drowning by a mystical fowl-serpent, until they meet the Bawk-Ness monster themselves—and a bunch of other cryptids who need help from their new human friends. Ages 8–12.

Eerie Tales from the School of Screams by Graham Annable (July 18, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-19503-6). Annable, director of the Oscar-nominated *Boxtrolls*, lines up the thrills in an anthology of spooky comics such as "The Face in the Forest" and "The Village that Vanished." Ages 8–12.

The Periodic Table of Elements: Understanding the Building Blocks of Everything by Jon Chad (Mar. 14, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-76761-5) continues the fact-based Science Comics series with a narrative of how Mel, a big fan of the periodic table, uses her understanding of the building-block elements to fight a villain. Ages 9–13.

Snot Goblins and Other Tasteless Tales by Rob Kutner and David DeGrand (July 25, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-78080-5) gives boogers and other gross-out kid delights the center stage in tales of putrid pet carcasses and defecating bugs, among other worst things a parent can imagine. Ages 8–12.

Squire & Knight by Scott Chantler (May 9, $22.99, ISBN 978-1-250-24933-3). It's hard managing up, as a young nerdy Squire learns. Squire's the one who solves the puzzles to slay the monsters, but it's bruiser knight Sir Kelton who takes the acclaim. Ages 8–12.

SKYBOUND'S THRILLING NEW

ADULT GRAPHIC NOVELS

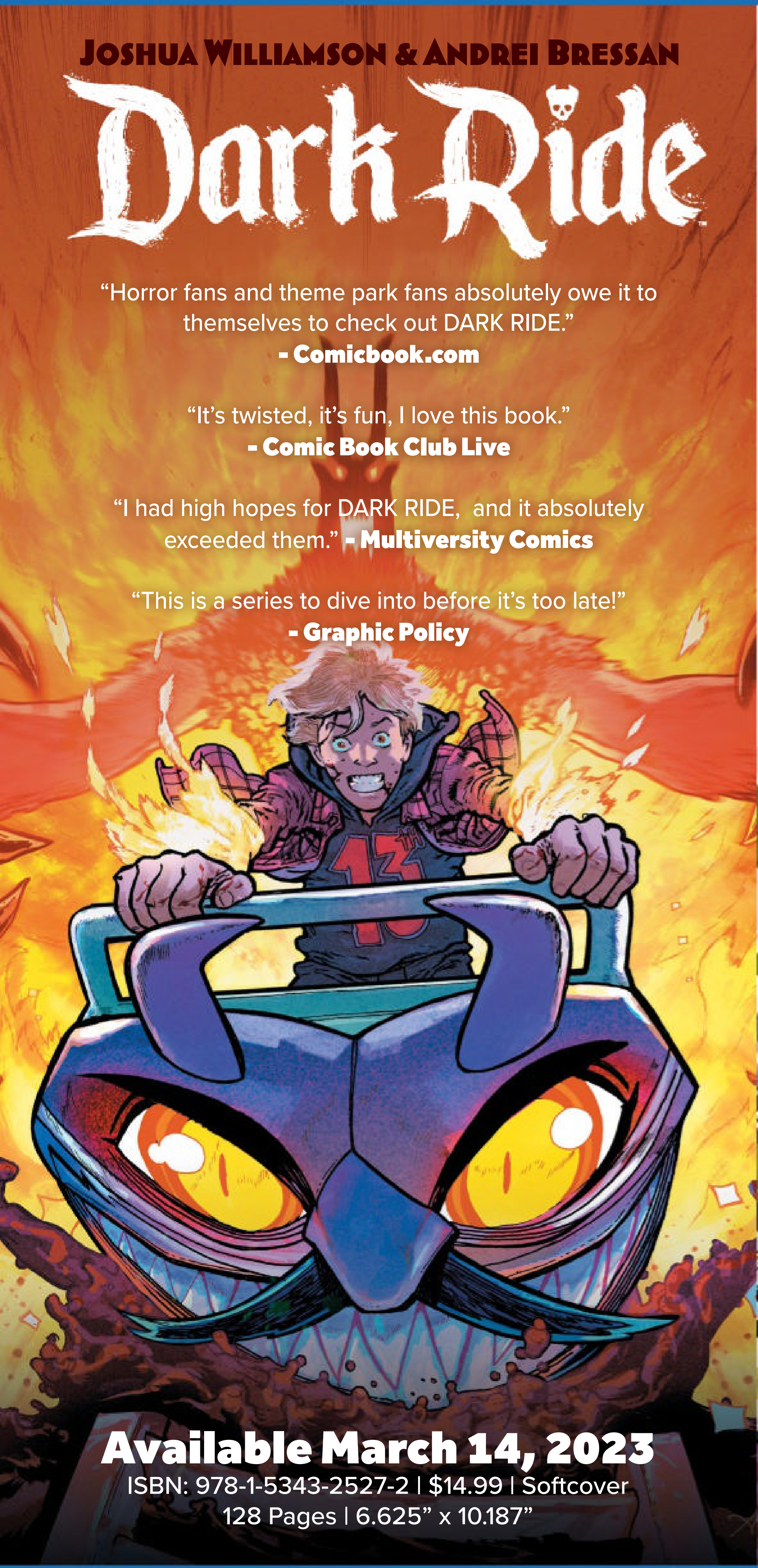


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IMAGE COMICS and all related images are owned by Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

Travis Daventhorpe for the Win! by Wes Molebash (Mar. 21, $13.99, ISBN 978-1-250-80140-1). Travis is just trying to win the science fair when a flying robot spins him into the multiverse, where a wizard reveals a prophecy. Ages 8–12.

GRAPHIC UNIVERSE

Another Band's Treasure: A Story of Recycled Instruments by Hua Lin Xie (Apr. 4, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-72847-823-4). Based on a true story, this graphic novel shows how a teacher in a small Paraguayan village brought music to his students by recycling found objects into homemade instruments. Ages 8–12.

The Green Girls by Loïc Nicoloff et al., trans. by Percy Leed (Mar. 7, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-72847-822-7). The Green Girls are a crew of young women who take to social media with livestreams and protest stunts to rally attention to ecological issues like pollution from container ships or overproduction of palm oil. Ages 9–14.

GRAPHIX

Akim Aliu: Dreamer by Akim Aliu et al. (Feb. 7, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-338-78760-3) opens up the life of the Ukrainian Nigerian Canadian professional hockey player, from growing up in Toronto and dealing with racism, to the triumph of achieving his dreams on the ice. Ages 8–12.

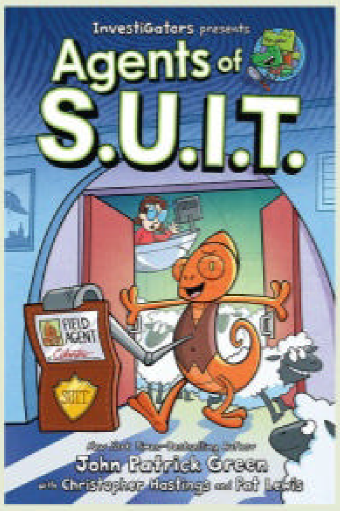
AKIM ALIU
DREAMER
A GRAPHIC NOVEL MEMOIR
GROWING UP BLACK IN THE WORLD OF HOCKEY
WRITTEN WITH GREG ANDERSON ELYSÉE
ILLUSTRATED BY KAREN DE LA VEGA

Squished: A Graphic Novel by Megan Wagner Lloyd and Michelle Mee Nutter (Mar. 7, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-338-56893-6). The team behind *Allergic* return with another family story, this one coming from a household of nine, where artistic 11-year-old Avery just wishes she could get a room of her own. Ages 8–12.

EARLY READER SPOTLIGHT

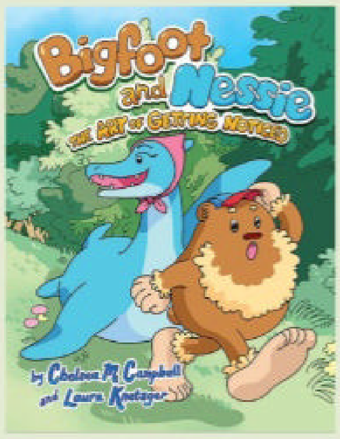
These graphic novels are flexible and fun entry points for early elementary school comics fans who are graduating from picture books but still love a readaloud. New series launches abound following the style of popular predecessors, with plenty of variety: Dig Dog Man? Check out Marshmallow Martians. Is Princess in Black a kid's jam? Meet futuristic female heroine Juniper Mae, Knight of Tykotech City.

Agents of S.U.I.T.
John Patrick Green, Christopher Hastings, and Pat Lewis. First Second, Feb. 21 ($10.99, ISBN 978-1-250-85256-4)
Cilantro the Chameleon from the InvestiGators gets a spin-off and some aliens to track down in this new series from Green. Ages 7–10.


InvestiGators presents
Agents of S.U.I.T.
FIELD AGENT
New York Times–Bestselling Author
John Patrick Green
with Christopher Hastings and Pat Lewis

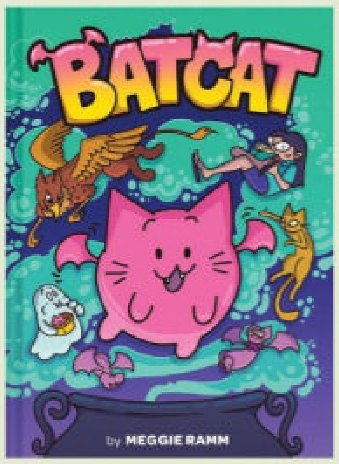
The Art of Getting Noticed (Bigfoot and Nessie #1)
Chelsea M. Campbell and Laura Knetzger. Penguin Workshop, Feb. 7 ($12.99, ISBN 978-0-593-38572-2)

Besties the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot share their trials with avoiding and getting noticed. Ages 4–8.


Bigfoot and Nessie
The Art of Getting Noticed
by Chelsea M. Campbell and Laura Knetzger

Batcat
Meggie Ramm. Amulet, Mar. 28 ($13.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-5657-3)

Reclusive Batcat tries to get rid of an unwelcome ice cream–thieving ghost on Spooky Island. Ages 6–9.


BATCAT
by MEGGIE RAMM

Caterpillars: What Will I Be When I Get to Be Me?
Kevin McCloskey. Toon, July 11 ($13.99, ISBN 978-1-662665-08-0; $7.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-662665-09-7)

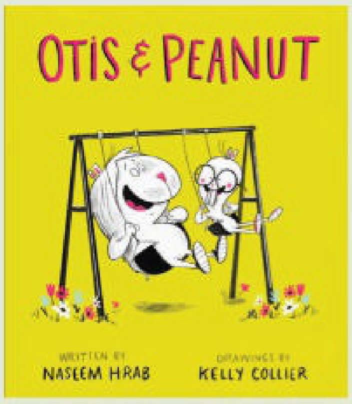
McCloskey (*We Dig Worms*) is back to explore the life cycle of the butterfly. Ages 4–7.

Go Camping (Wombats #1)
Maddie Frost. Viking, Apr. 4 ($12.99, ISBN 978-0-593-46529-5)

Albert and Pickles go camping in Woolly Moon Beast territory, but have very different notions of roughing it. Ages 6–9.

Juniper Mae: Knight of Tykotech City
Sarah Soh. Nobrow, Mar. 7 ($12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-912497-45-4)

A young inventor rises up like her hero knights to help citizens in her ultra-techie futuristic city. Ages 7–9.

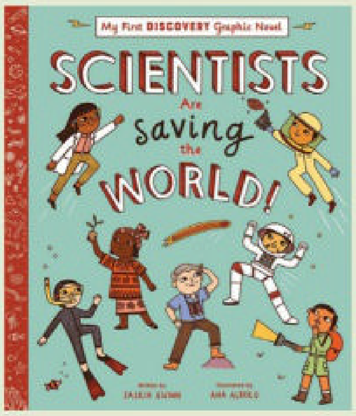

OTIS & PEANUT
WRITTEN BY NASEEM HRAB
DRAWINGS BY KELLY COLLIER

Otis & Peanut
Naseem Hrab and Kelly Collier. OwlKids, Apr. 15 ($18.95, ISBN 978-1-77147-496-2)

Odd couple guinea pig Otis and naked mole rat Peanut work through such challenges as getting a haircut and decorating a home. Ages 6–8.

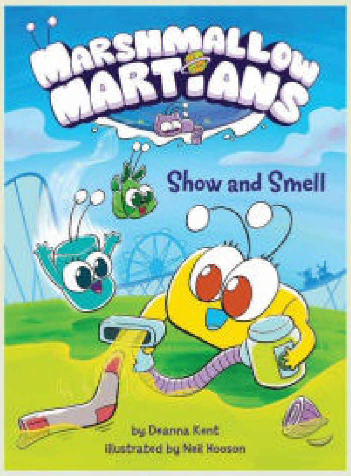
School Day Drama (Chi-Chi and Pey-Pey #1)
Jennifer Fosberry and Shiho Pate. Simon Spotlight, June 27 ($6.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-66593-188-5)

A chicken who digs snacks and a pogo-stick-enthusiast penguin become unlikely friends. Ages 4–6.


My First DISCOVERY Graphic Novel
SCIENTISTS Are Saving the WORLD!

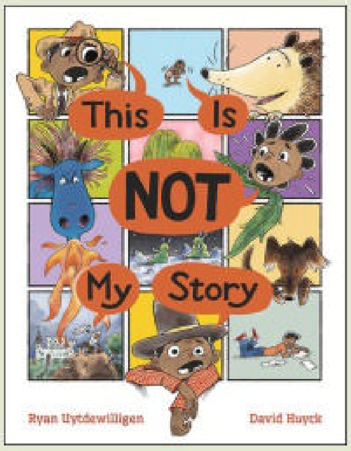
Scientists Are Saving the World! (My First Discovery Graphic Novel #1)
Saskia Gwinn and Ana Albero. Magic Cat, May 2 ($14.99, ISBN 978-1-4197-6596-4)

These capsule graphic bios introduce young readers to innovative astronauts, astrophysicists, paleontologists, zoologists, and more. Ages 6–9.


MARSHMALLOW MARTIANS
Show and Smell
by Deanna Kent
illustrated by Neil Hooson

Show and Smell (Marshmallow Martians #1)
Deanna Kent and Neil Hooson. Random House Graphic, Apr. 18 ($13.99, ISBN 978-0-593-56608-4)

Goofy alien marshmallows land on Earth and gather smelly stuff to take back to their home planet. Ages 5–8.


This Is NOT My Story
Ryan Uytdewilligen
David Huyck

This Is Not My Story
Ryan Uytdewilligen and David Huyck. Kids Can, June 6 ($19.99, ISBN 978-1-5253-0343-2)

Literary genres get a literal tour as a young protagonist treks through different tropes of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Ages 6–9.

—M.L.

FRESH NEW TITLES
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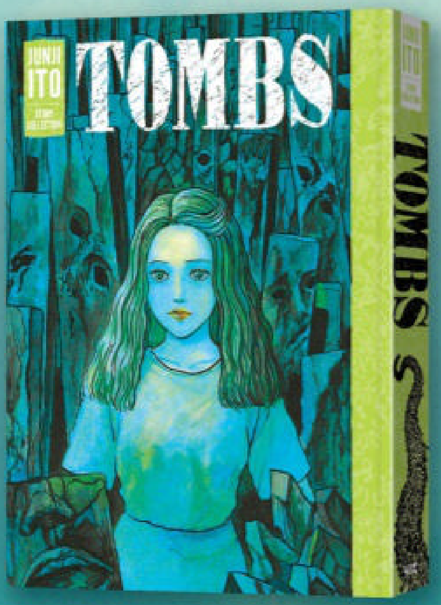
FROM VIZ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TOMBS

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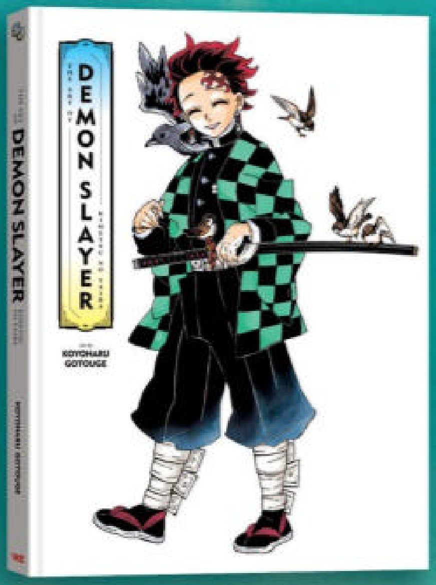
DEMON SLAYER

The Art of Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba
Art by Koyoharu Gotouge

Hunting demons has never been so beautiful as in this collection of art from the global smash hit *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba!*

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Price: $24.99
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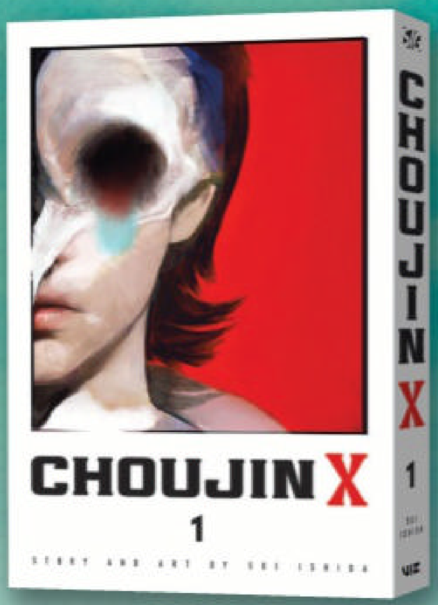

Choujin X, Vol. 1
Story and Art by Sui Ishida

Dark humor and quirky horror unite in this tale of clashing heroes and monsters from the creator of *Tokyo Ghoul* and *Tokyo Ghoul: re!*

ISBN: 9781974736690
Price: $14.99
Available 2/21/23

Tomb: Junji Ito Story Collection
© JI Inc./Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc.
CHOUJIN X © 2021 by Sui Ishida/SHUEISHA Inc.
KIMETSU NO YAIBA GOTOUGE KOYOHARU GASHU -IKUSEISO-
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VIZ

REAL FANS READ
THE FANATIC
BY PUBLISHERS WEEKLY
The Insider's Guide to Comics, Culture & Graphic Novels
Get your Fanatic on at PUBLISHERSWEEKLY.COM/FANATIC

HARPERALLEY

Drawn to Change the World: Graphic Novel Collection by Emma Reynolds et al. (June 20, $11.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-308421-6) presents an anthology of drawn stories of youth activists coming together for ecological justice. Ages 8–12.

Ember and the Island of Lost Creatures by Jason Pamment (June 27, $15.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-306520-8). A miniature boy must search his way through Puzzle Island and evade a sea monster, among other dangers. Ages 8–12.

Saving Chupie by Amparo Ortiz and Ronnie Garcia (June 13, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-295028-4). When Violeta travels to help her grandmother in Puerto Rico after a hurricane, they fix up the family restaurant and discover a friendly Chupacabra. Ages 8–12.

THERE'S A NEW WITCH IN TOWN
SHAKTI
Written by SJ Sindu
Illustrated by Nabi H. Ali

Shakti by SJ Sindu and Nabi H. Ali (May 2, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-309011-8) features an Indian American girl who draws on the power of a Hindu goddess to save her loved ones and community from witchy meanies. Ages 8–12.

Unhappy Camper by Lily Lamotte and Ann Xu (May 16, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-297389-4). Two sisters who feel very differently about their heritage spend the summer at a Taiwanese American camp—Claire's enthusiastic as always about all thing Taiwanese, but Michelle's still not sure. Ages 8–12.

HIPPO PARK

The Love Report by BéKa and Maya, trans. by Jessie Aufiery and Ivanka Hahnenberger (June 13, $19.99, ISBN 978-1-66264-040-7). Why do people fall in love? More particularly, why do tweens? Buddies Grace and Lola decide to tackle this question, and by observing and analyzing all the dating data in the schoolyard, they uncover unexpected results. Ages 10–14.

HOLT

Ghost Book by Remy Lai (July 18, $22.99, ISBN 978-1-250-81041-0) charts the story of a ghost-human friendship between a girl who sees spirits and a boy whose soul is caught in limbo between life and death. She wants to help him return to the land of the living, but that wish comes at great cost. Ages 8–12.

IRON CIRCUS

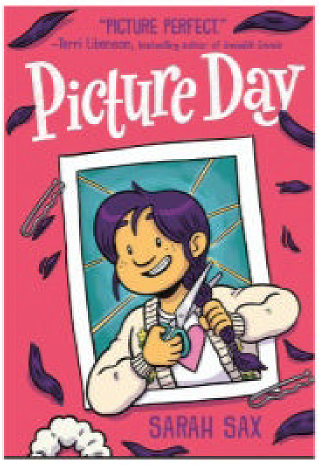
Occulted by Ryan Estrada, Amy Rose, and Jeongmin Lee (May 2,, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63899-109-0) tells Rose's true story of growing up in a cult in the late 1990s, and how the Heaven's Gate tragedy led her to find freedom—which starts with risky trips to the forbidden public library. Ages 10–12.

KABOOM!

The Curse (Orcs! #2) by Christine Larsen (Mar. 30, $16.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68415-890-4). An Orc celebratory rager ends up in a party foul that unleashes something very old and very sinister, just as a necromancer crops up to make all kinds of trouble in the wide Known World. Age: 8–14.

KIDS CAN

ThunderBoom by Jack Briglio and Claudia Dávila (May 2, $16.99, ISBN 978-1-5253-0496-5). Briglio scripts a tale of a neurodivergent boy named Logan who becomes a superhero in his mind to face the fears that arise on a family trip when he briefly loses sight of his parents. Ages 9–12.


"PICTURE PERFECT."
—Terri Libenson, bestselling author of Invisible Emmie
Picture Day
SARAH SAX

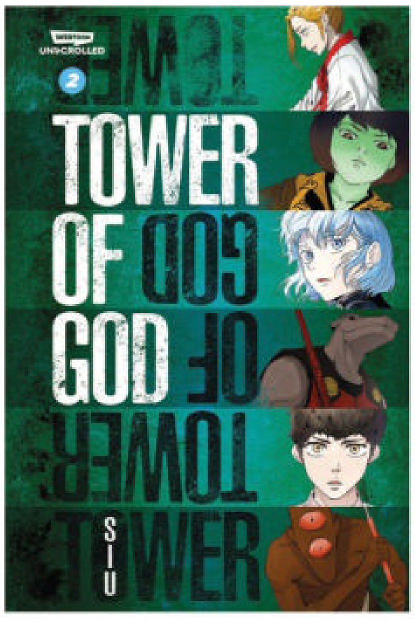
KNOPF

Picture Day (The Brinkley Yearbooks #1) by Sarah Sax (June 27, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-593-30687-1).

Fresh New Reads

WEBTOON UNSCROLLED

Young Adult

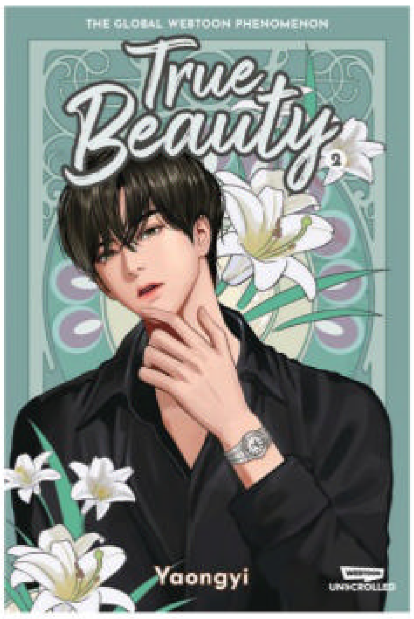


Tower of God Vol 2

by SIU

Available May 23, 2023

9781990778056; Paper-Over-Board; $24.99 USD / $32.99 CDN
9781990778049; Trade Paperback; $18.99 USD / $23.99 CDN



True Beauty Vol 2

by Yaongyi

Available May 30, 2023

9781990778032; Paper-Over-Board; $24.99 USD / $32.99 CDN
9781990778025; Trade Paperback; $18.99 USD / $23.99 CDN

Cursed Princess Club Vol 2

By LambCat

Available July 4, 2023

9781990778414; Paper-Over-Board; $24.99 USD / $32.99 CDN
9781990778407; Trade Paperback; $18.99 USD / $23.99 CDN

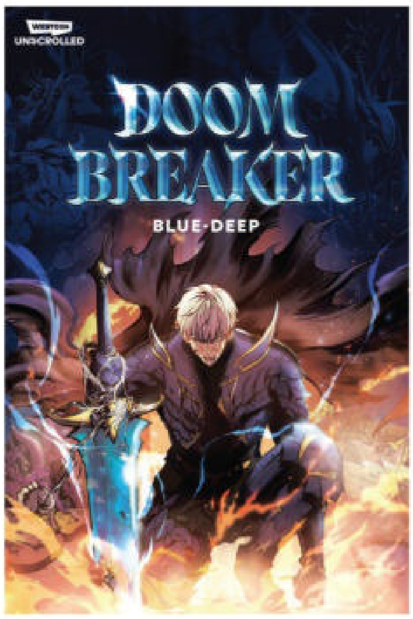
Adult

Everything is Fine Vol 1

By Mike Birchall

Available May 16, 2023

9781990259913; Paper-Over-Board; $27.99 USD / $32.99 CDN
9781990259777; Trade Paperback; $19.99 USD / $24.99 CDN



Doombreaker Vol 1

By Deep-Blue

Available July 25, 2023

9781990259746; Paper-Over-Board; $27.99 USD / $32.99 CDN
9781990259883; Trade Paperback; $19.99 USD / $24.99 CDN

GremoryLand

By A. Rasen

Available August 15, 2023

9781990778650; Paper-Over-Board; $27.99 USD / $32.99 CDN
9781990778643; Trade Paperback; $19.99 USD / $24.99 CDN

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tundra

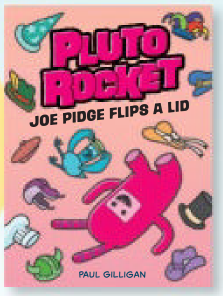
New graphic novel series for ages 6 to 9
from the publisher of Narwhal and Jelly!

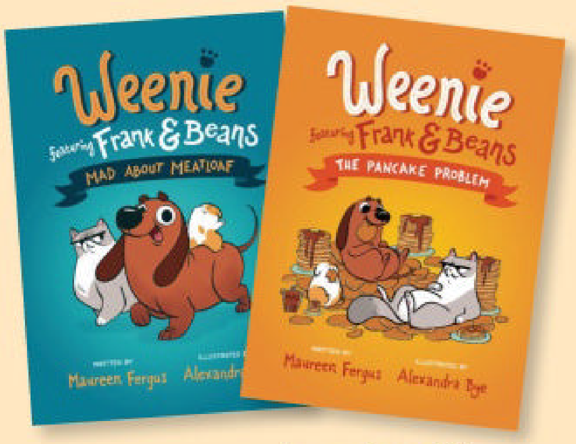
A hilarious series about a naive but friendly alien on a secret mission and her new pal, a wise-cracking pigeon who is the self-proclaimed king of the neighborhood.

Look for book two, coming OCTOBER 2023!

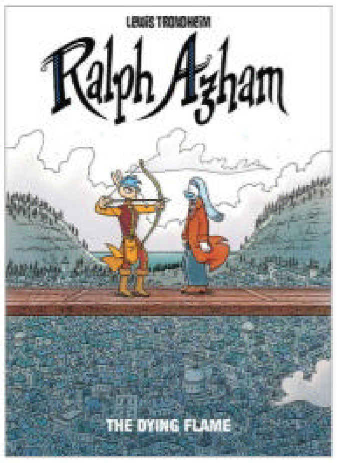
Meet Weenie, a lovable wiener dog, and his two best friends Frank and Beans.

PLUTO ROCKET
NEW IN TOWN
PAUL GILLIGAN





When Viv cuts off her trademark braid right before class pictures are taken, her social status skyrockets, and suddenly everyone wants her to livestream their makeovers—but what about the best friends she had before her new look? Ages 8–12.



LITTLE, BROWN

Buzzing by Samuel Sattin and Rye Hickman (July 18, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-316-62841-9) gets into the head of a kid with OCD, who finds that the clinic his mom wants him to attend doesn't work as well as role-playing games do to quiet the buzzing in his busy mind. Ages 8–12.

Kid Penguin (Reggie #1) by Jen de Oliveira (June 6, $7.99 paper, ISBN 978-0-7595-5756-7). Reggie's a silly flightless bird, full of mischief and pranks, like cutting off his feathers and trying to stick them back before his mom finds out and sneaking cookie dough. Ages 8–12.

NOBROW

Galápagos (Scientists in the Wild #1) by Helen Scales and Rômolo D'Hipólito (March 7, $19.99, ISBN 978-1-83874-859-3) ships readers out with a team of marine biologists as they study the fauna and flora of the Galapagos Islands, climbing its coasts and volcanoes, and learning about Darwin's theory of evolution along the way. Ages 8-12.

ONI

Missing You by Phellip Willian and Melissa Garabeli (April 11, $15.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63715-207-2). Bereaved sisters find a deer and make it their pet, and while it helps them heal their grief, they learn that this wild thing isn't meant to be kept from the forest. Ages 8-12

The Snowcat Prince by Dina Norlund (Mar. 7, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63715-198-3). The baby of the royal family, the snowcat prince Syv, seeks the missing crown of his ancestors on a grand adventure and coming-of-age journey. Ages 8–12.

PAPERCUTZ

The Dying Flame (Ralph Azham #4) by Lewis Trondheim (July 25, $19.99, ISBN 978-1-5458-1032-3) concludes the Angoulême Prize–winning cartoonist's adventures featuring the Chosen One, Ralph, and his allies (a mage and thief) in the kingdom of Astolia, as he discovers some surprises about the true nature of his nemesis Vam Syrus. Ages 12–16.

The Loud House Super Special by Loud House Creative Team (Feb. 7, $12.99, ISBN 978-1-5458-1023-1). Based on the Nickelodeon animated series, this anthology chronicles the antics of superheroes Ace Savvy, Muscle Fish, El Falcon de Fuego, and all of their super-duper friends and family. Ages 8–11

PENGUIN WORKSHOP

Who Is Tibet's Exiled Leader? The 14th Dalai Lama by Teresa Robeson and Angela Poon (Apr. 4, $12.99, ISBN 978-0-593-38460-2). The latest entry in the Who HQ Graphic Novel series offers a biography of the 14th Dalai Lama, from his origins in Tibet to his eventual exile, delving into religion and politics. Ages 8–12

RANDOM HOUSE GRAPHIC

Grace Needs Space! by Benjamin A. Wilgus and Rii Abrego (Apr. 4, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-593-18238-3). In this sci-fi adventure, Grace is pumped to head to the moon with her mom Kendra, who she thinks will make the trip a blast (since her other mom, Evelyn, is such a dud). But when they crash-land, things don't turn out quite as she imagined. Ages 8–12.

The SNOWCAT PRINCE
DINA NORLUND

The Moth Keeper by K. O'Neill (Mar. 7, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-593-18226-0). In a chilly desert town where lunar moths keep the community humming, a young moth keeper, Anya, longs to see the sun—risking failure of her responsibilities for a chance at warmth. Ages 8–12.

ROARING BROOK

Lost in the Mountains (Survival Scout #1) by Maxwell Eaton (May 2, $19.99, ISBN 978-1-250-79046-0). Through the story of Scout, who gets lost in the mountains, readers learn survival tips and skills such as finding shelter, food, water, and ways to signal for help. Ages 8–12.

SOURCEBOOKS

Global: One Fragile World. An Epic Fight for Survival. by Eoin Colfer, Andrew Donkin, and Giovanni Rigano (Apr. 11, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-72826-219-2). Colfer and the *Artemis Fowl* graphic novel team come together to raise awareness of climate change through the dual stories of Sami, who lives along the Indian Ocean, and Yuki, in Northern Canada. Ages 10–14.

SUNBIRD

Irena Sendler: A Graphic Novel by Margaret Littman and Sara Luna (May 23, $10.99, ISBN 978-1-5037-6578-8). The story of humanitarian and social worker Irene Sendler, who helped smuggle 2,500 Jewish children out of harm's way in Nazi-occupied Poland during WWII, marks the newest entry in the It's Her Story series. Ages 7 and up.

TITAN COMICS

Bash! by Rudy Gobert and Vince Serrano (Feb 14, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-78773-988-8). In the intergalactic basketball tournament, the stakes are as high as infinite space, but one young player from an impoverished origin still hopes to rise up and compete. Ages 10–14.

TOP SHELF

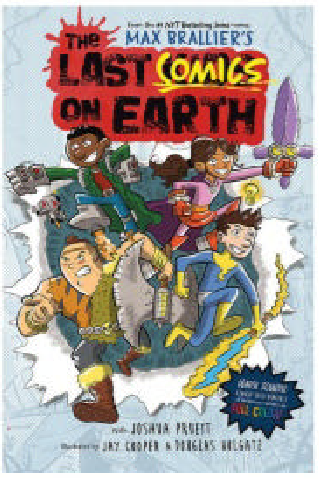
Contact! (Cosmic Cadets #1) by Ben Crane and Mimi Alves (Apr. 18, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-60309-520-4). It's up to the son of a spaceship captain to save his father—and the rest of humanity—from a galaxy-wide war when Jimmil and his buddies get dropped on an alien planet and try to contact its inhabitants. Ages 9–12.

Skull Cat and the Curious Castle (Skull Cat #1) by Norman Shurtliff (Feb. 21, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-60309-519-8). Scully's employed in a creepy castle as the garden-keeper cat, but when everyone else there vanishes, he must summon great courage to figure out where they all went (and, more worryingly, if someone took them). Ages 9–12.

The Unpetables by Dennis Messner (June 20, $9.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-60309-523-5). Pigmund and Lizárdo break free from the petting zoo and go out on the town, hiding from maintenance man Kenny and offering up their services as animal companions as long as no customer ever pets them again. Ages 9–12.

VIKING

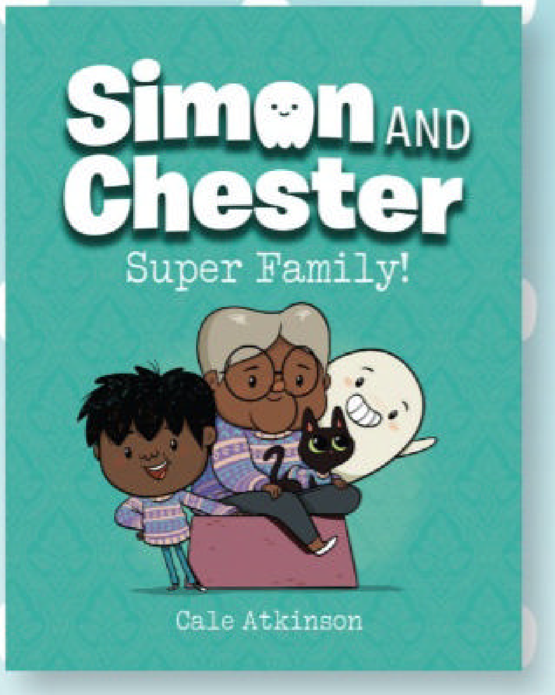
The Last Comics on Earth by Max Brallier et al. (Apr. 25, $14.99, ISBN 978-0-593-52677-4) spins off a metafictional comic book adventure from within the Last Kids on Earth series universe. After the kids determine to become superheroes in their own fan-fiction creation, they must get rid of their fave series' original author. Ages 8–12.


MAX BRALLIER'S
THE LAST COMICS ON EARTH
with JOSHUA PRUETT
JAY COOPER & DOUGLAS HOLGATE

WORDSONG

Garvey's Choice: The Graphic Novel by Nikki Grimes and Theodore Taylor III (June 6, $22.99, ISBN 978-1-66266-002-3) blends verse and comics to tell the story of Garvey. Pressured by his father to be an athlete, Garvey soothes his sense of isolation with food but gets picked on for his weight. When he joins the school chorus, he finds his true friends and self. Ages 9–12.

tundra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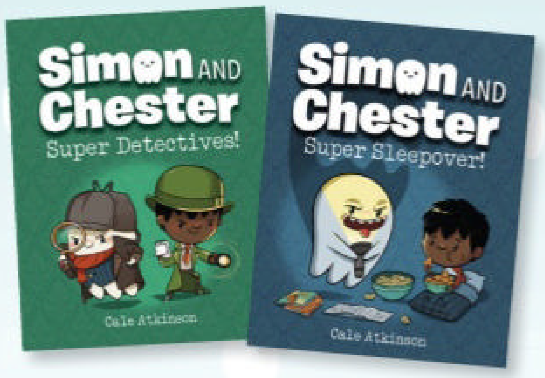
Super Family!
Cale Atkinson

Welcome to the world of Simon and Chester, ghost and boy duo extraordinaire.


Simon AND Chester
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Cale Atkinson
Simon AND Chester
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E-VERSE

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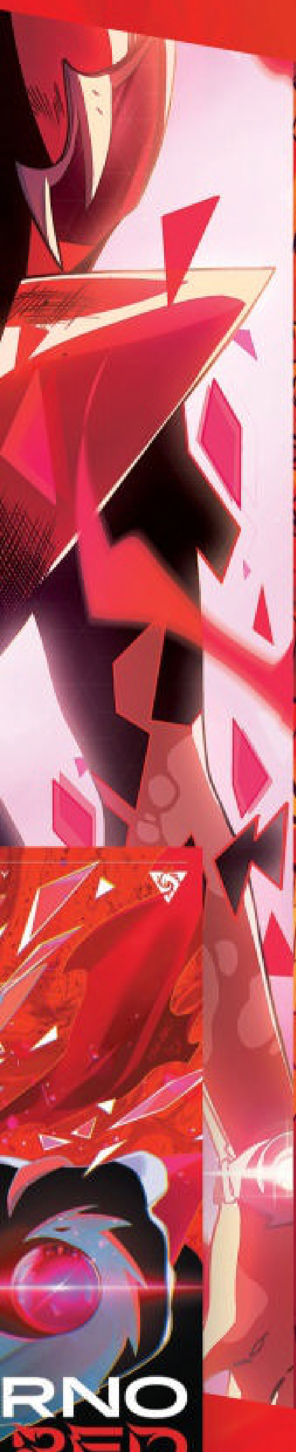

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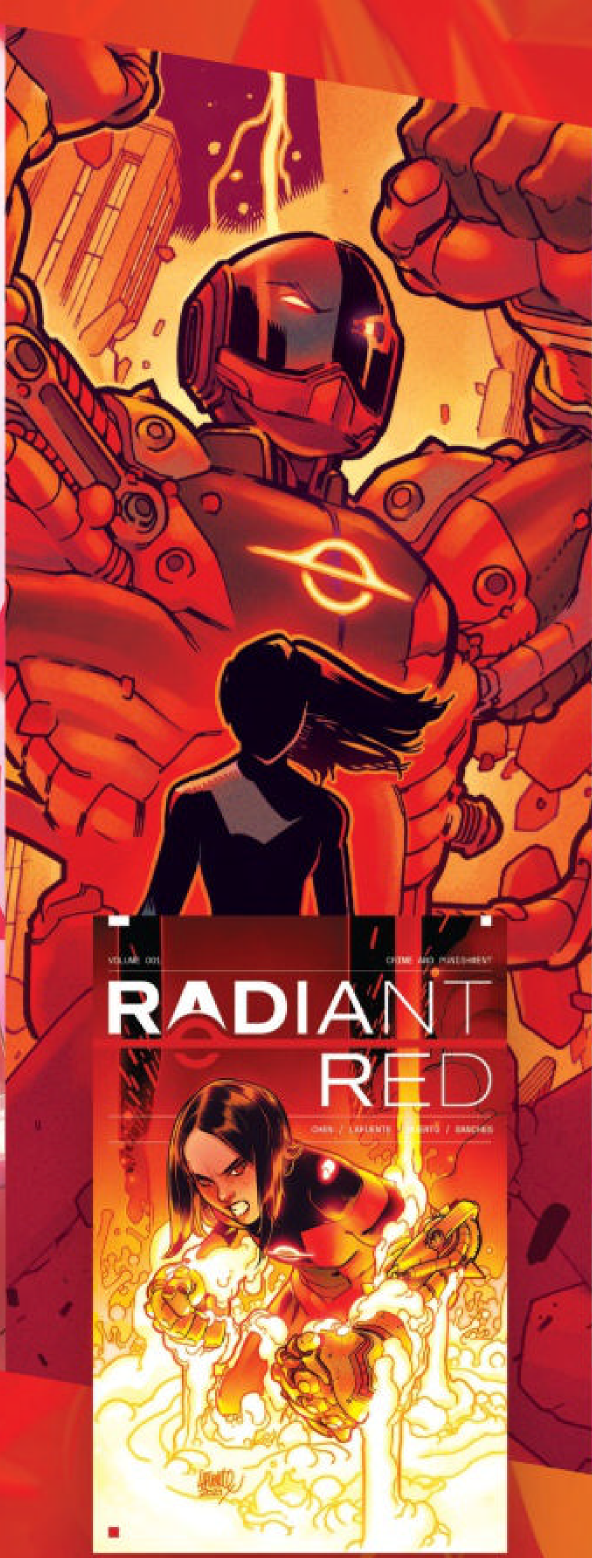
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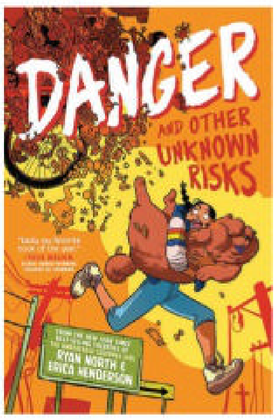
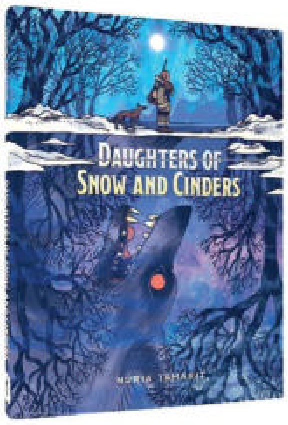
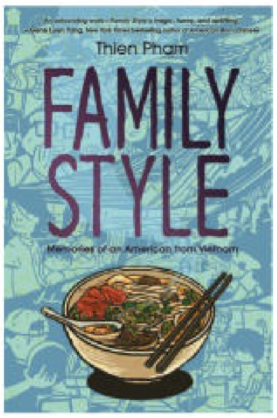
Young Adult Comics & Graphic Novels

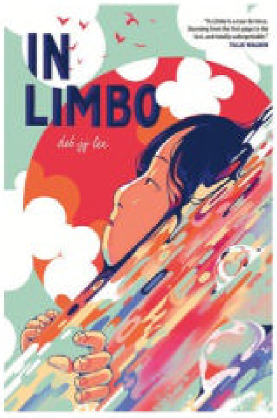
By Meg Lemke

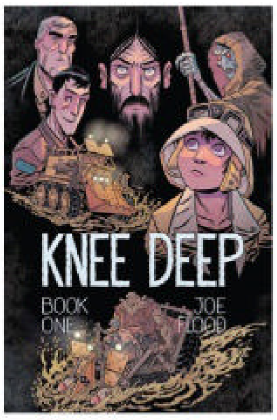
Teen comics this season embrace and remix genre tropes in tales starring ghosts, demons, and one bloodthirsty mermaid alongside more serious-minded coming-of-age memoirs.

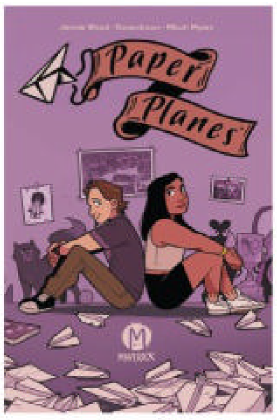












TOP 10

Danger and Other Unknown Risks

Ryan North and Erica Henderson. Penguin Workshop, Apr. 4 ($24.99, ISBN 978-0-593-22482-3)
The raucous, Eisner Award–winning *Unbeatable Squirrel Girl* team reunite for a futuristic-fantastical roller-coaster tale about a girl and a dog who just might save the world. Ages 12–18.

Daughters of Snow and Cinders

Núria Tamarit, trans. by Jenna Allen. Fantagraphics, May 9 ($29.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-756-9)
Tamarit follows up *Giantess* (an "instant classic" per *PW*'s star review) with a solo venture featuring a young heroine who braves a mystical frozen landscape. Ages 14–18.

Family Style: Memories of an American from Vietnam

Thien Pham. First Second, June 20 ($17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-80972-8)
Flavors of homestyle recipes guide the storytelling in this delectable-looking family memoir from Pham (*Sumo*), a culinary comics contributor at *Eater SF*. Ages 14–18.

Frontera

Julio Anta and Jacoby Salcedo. HarperAlley, June 6 ($17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-06-305494-3)
Anta (the Home series) again mixes the supernatural with social commentary in this chronicle of a young traveler who crosses the Sonoran Desert with the help of a handsome ghost. Ages 13 and up.

In Limbo: A Graphic Memoir

Deb Jj Lee. First Second, Mar. 7 ($17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-25266-1)
Breathtaking cover art promises something special in the debut graphic memoir from Lee (*The Invisible Boy*), about growing up between two cultures in a Korean American family. Ages 14–18.

Knee Deep

Joe Flood. Oni, May 30 ($21.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-62010-938-0)
A gritty, grimy sci-fi adventure from kid-comics veteran Flood pulls readers into a puzzle-like system of subterranean tunnels, where a teen girl searches for her lost parents. Ages 13 and up.

Paper Planes

Jennie Woods and Dozerdraws. Maverick, May 16 ($14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-952303-54-8)
Woods, whose *Flutter* was an *Advocate* and B&N best book, teams up with *Lumberjanes* alum Dozerdraws for a graphic novel about two besties who are exiled to a summer camp for troubled teens, where they unpack their past transgressions. Ages 14 and up.

The Sea in You

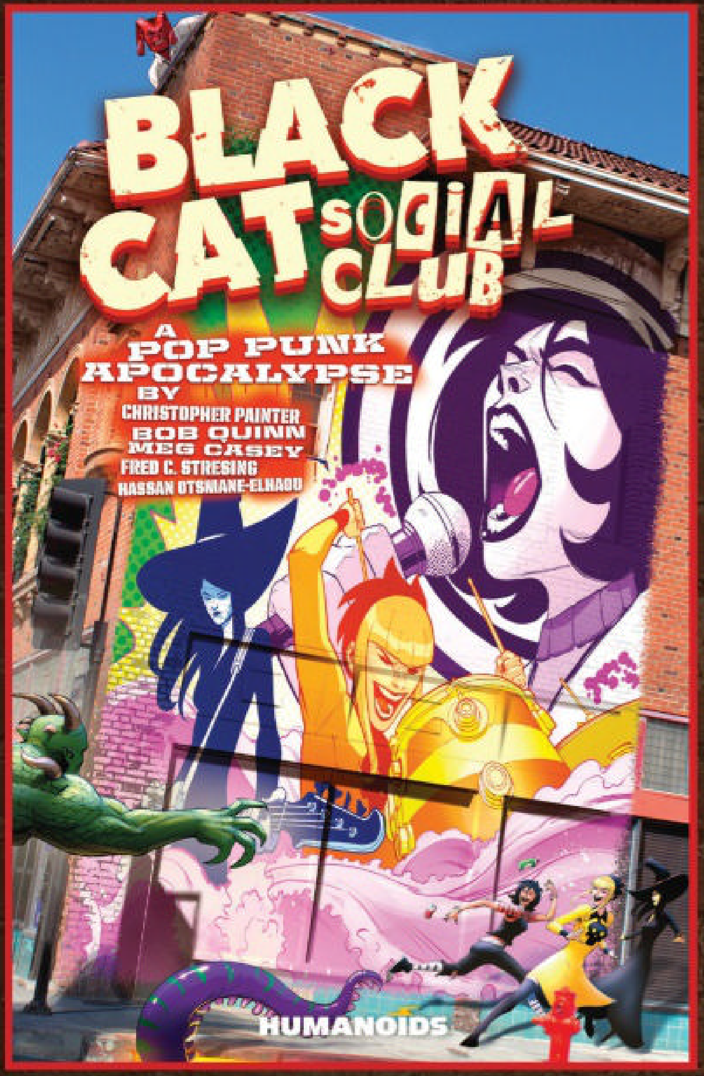
Jessi Sheron. Iron Circus, March 14 ($15 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63899-111-3)
A mermaid with a taste for human flesh becomes smitten with a human girl with a bad boyfriend in this graphic novel collecting the popular webtoon. Ages 13–18.

Sunshine

Jarrett J. Krosoczka. Graphix, Apr. 18 ($14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-338-35631-1)
National Book Award finalist Krosoczka's sequel to *Hey, Kiddo* recalls a transformative summer spent as a counselor at a camp for seriously ill kids. Ages 12 and up.

The Watcher's Test (DeadEndia #1)

Hamish Steele. Union Square Kids, May 2 ($24.99, ISBN 978-1-4549-4895-7)
Eisner Newcomer Award winner Steele sets a transgender first love story in a demon-infested amusement park (where a pet pug's the first possessed). Ages 14–18.


BLACK CAT SOCIAL CLUB
A POP PUNK APOCALYPSE
BY
CHRISTOPHER PAINTER
BOB QUINN
MEG CASEY
FRED C. STRESING
HASSAN OTSMANE-ELHAOU
HUMANOIDS

BREAKING INTO MUSIC IS *HELL*

Despite their punk rock skills (and a little songcasting magic), the witchy women of **Black Cat Social Club** haven't hit their big break. That is, until a member of the band makes a deal with a literal demon for more power! Now, the band is killing it at their shows. But they may accidentally be killing the entire world by fueling these corporate demons' evil plans, which for sure involve brimstone, monsters, the works! Super uncool!

Can the band stop the apocalypse? Is drummer Maggie's songwriting, uh, "technique" the key? Will the demon Stan ever shut up?! If you've ever wished Josie and the Pussycats had demons, or Buffy fronted a rock band, you've found your next favorite book in **Black Cat Social Club**!

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HUMANOIDS

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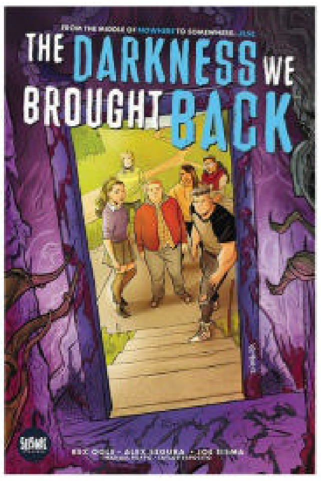
THE RIVER WEBSITE....4/11/2023
THE ONE CHAIN BOOKSTORE LEFT....4/11/2023
YOUR LOCAL COMIC SHOP....4/11/2023
INDIE BOOKSTORES EVERYWHERE....4/11/2023
ORDER NOW!

BLACK CAT
SOCIAL CLUB
TOTAL SELLOUT WORLD TOUR
4/11/2023

AFTERSHOCK

The Darkness We Brought Back by Alex Segura, Rex Ogle, and Joe Eisma (May 30, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-956731-27-9). After a group of teens drops through a portal into another dimension, they return to the real world altered forever—and at risk of losing their souls. Ages 13 and up.


FROM THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE TO SOMEWHERE ELSE
THE DARKNESS WE BROUGHT BACK

ARCHAIA

Flavor Girls by Loïc Locatelli-Kournwsky (Mar. 21, $24.99, ISBN 978-1-68415-889-8). A trio of super-girls, possessing fruit-flavored powers, act as guardians of Earth. Now, they're considering a new member hoping to join their sweet-saviors mélange. Ages 14 and up.

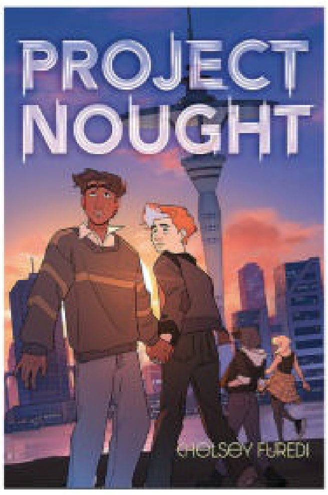
ARCHIE

Going Viral (Bite-Sized Archie #2) by Ron Cacace and Vincent Lovallo (May 16, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-64576-877-7) collects the updated webcomic series in which those familiar Riverdale teens grapple with conundrums in the social media–saturated present. Ages 15 and up.

CLARION

83 Days in Mariupol: A War Diary by Don Brown (May 16, $18.99, ISBN 978-0-06-331156-5). Sibert Honor winner Brown draws a war resistance portrait of the people of the Ukrainian city Mariupol, which met with terrible destruction as an early target in the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Ages 14 and up.

Project Nought by Chelsey Furedi (Feb. 21, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-358-38169-3). This sci-fi and time-travel adventure scoops up high schooler Ren from the 1990s and transports him to 2122, where he meets a figure from his "past" current life, and crushes on a kid who only exists in this future he'll never remember. Ages 13 and up.



DARK HORSE

Basil and Oregano by Melissa Capriglione (May 9, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5067-2870-4). A magical cooking academy is the backdrop for a meet-cute between two aspiring student chefs in this queer romance. Ages 10 and up.

Break Out by Zack Kaplan, Wilton Santos, and Jason Wordie (Apr. 18, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5067-2989-3). In the future, kidnappings of teenagers by fly-by spaceships have become status quo, but Liam isn't putting up with it when his little brother gets nabbed—and he and his crew determine to break into the floating Cube prison. Ages 12 and up.

Star Wars: Hyperspace Stories by Amanda Diebert et al. (May 16, ISBN 978-1-5067-3286-2) launches a new anthology series of side adventures from the time of resistance back to the era of the high republic in the world of Star Wars, featuring various comics scriptwriters and artists including Cecil Castelluci and Lucas Marangon. Ages 10 and up.

FAIRSQUARE

A Boy Named Rose by Gaelle Geniller (June 20, $29.99 trade paper, ISBN 979-8-9859278-6-3). Rose is a presumed boy who grows up in a 1920s cabaret hall and longs to dance onstage in beautiful costumes. Ages 16 and up.

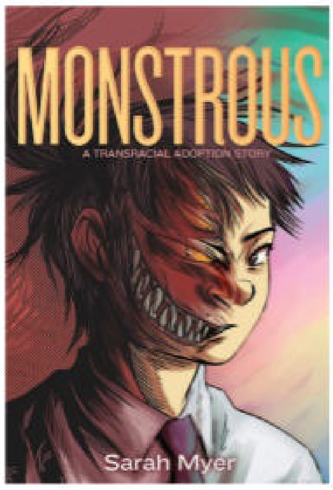
FIRST SECOND

Belle of the Ball by Mari Costa (Mar. 21, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-78412-4). Three girls between whom crushes ricochet form the center of this jocks vs. nerds queer romance, when shy smarty pants Belle offers to tutor the sporty girlfriend of her cheerleader crush. Ages 14–18.

Hungry Ghost by Victoria Ying (Apr. 25, $24.99, ISBN 978-1-250-76699-1) delves into the complex relationships of a teen who struggles with an eating disorder, and how family, friends, and cultural context interact with self-image, pathology, and recovery from anorexia. Ages 14–18.

Legendary Legends of Legendarious Achievery (Books of Clash #1) by Gene Luen Yang, Les McClaine, and Alison Acton (May 30, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-81626-9). Eisner and Printz award winner Yang adapts the mobile games *Clash of Clans* and *Clash Royale* into a fantasy-adventure battle series. Ages 14–18.

Monstrous: A Transracial Adoption Story by Sarah Myer (June 27, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-250-26880-8). Myer's debut graphic memoir recalls how cosplay and comics art helped her escape the isolation and anger she felt growing up and getting bullied as a Korean American adoptee in a white family and a dominantly white rural community. Ages 14–18.

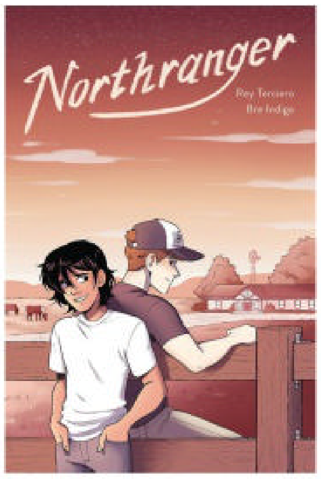


GRAPHIX

Colin Kaepernick: Change the Game by Colin Kaepernick, Eve L. Ewing, and Orlando Caicedo (Mar. 7, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-338-78965-2). The athlete and activist sets his debut graphic memoir in the pivotal years of high school, when he's being scouted by colleges and the major leagues for baseball, but thinks football could be his calling. Ages 12 and up.

HARPERALLEY

Northranger by Rey Terciero and Bre Indigo (June 6, $17.99 trade paper,


Northranger
Rey Terciero
Bre Indigo

ISBN 978-0-06-300738-3) finds a young ranch hand falling for the son of his boss—but there's more than just class differences to get over in this blossoming queer romance. Ages 13 and up.

HELVETIQ

Big Bangs and Black Holes: A Graphic Novel Guide to the Universe by Jérémie Francfort and Herji, trans. by Jeffrey K. Butt (May 16, $24.99, ISBN 978-3-907293-75-1), spins readers on a comics tour of the universe and the principles of physics, drafting in Newton, Einstein, and other scientific minds, and diving into black holes and gravitational waves. Ages 12–18.

HIGHWATER

The Rez Doctor by Gitz Crazyboy et al. (May 2 $22.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-55379-924-5), based on a true story, walks the circuitous path of a Blackfoot boy who is inspired to go to medical school. Ages 15 and up.

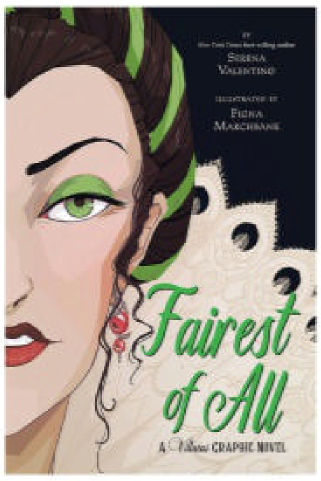
Visions of the Crow (Dreams #1) by Wanda John-Kehewin and Nicole Marie Burton. Damon's a high school senior with a rough home life who is just trying to keep his head down and finish school, until a mysterious crow and a waking dream pull him into revelations of his ancestry. Ages 15 and up

INHABIT MEDIA

Ahiahia the Orphan by Levi Illuitok and Nate Wells (Apr. 11, $19.95 ISBN 978-1-77227-443-1) retells a traditional Kugaaruk tale, in which a boy raised by elders after his parents were killed must find a way to escape the same fate, relying on a dog and an amulet to help. Ages 12 and up.

HYPERION

Fairest of All (Villians #1) by Serena Valentino and Fiona Marchbank (May 2, $21.99, ISBN 978-1-368-06817-8) adapts into a graphic novel series Valentino's bestselling series that reflects back a more nuanced vision of the royal stepmother peering into the mirror of Snow White's fairy tale, and whether the mirror itself harbored the evil intentions. Ages 12–18.


Serena Valentino
Fiona Marchbank
Fairest of All
A Villains Graphic Novel

IDW

A Fire Among the Clouds (Codex Black #1) by Camilo Moncada Lozano (Apr. 4, $13.99 trade paper,

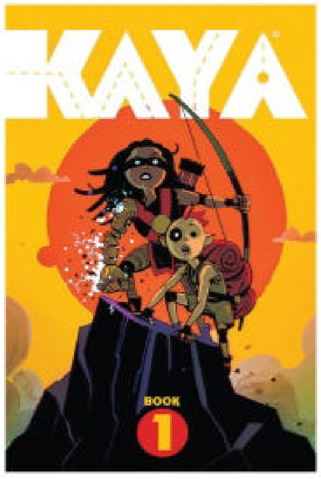
Pixies of the Sixties
GIHEF ✻ JUL MAROH ✻ GIULIO MACAIONE
CHRISTIAN LACHENAL ✻ ALBERTO ZANON
You Really Got Me Now
ON SALE MARCH 2023 AT YOUR LOCAL BOOKSHOP
HUMANOIDS

The Swinging Sixties are taking the UK by storm, but the biggest news story?

Fairies have revealed themselves!

Kicking off the brand-new graphic anthology series, this volume includes two stories! First we meet Anann, a young fairy who dreams of becoming a musician in the human world, discovering both danger and love along the way. Then, in a brand new story by Jul Maroh (*Blue is the Warmest Color*), investigative journalist Ailith looks into a series of strange rites, unearthing a shocking secret!

ISBN 978-1-68405-959-1) introduces a Zapotec heroine in 15th-century Mesoamerica who, along with a flying warrior, searches for her father and battles monsters in this folkloric fantasy adventure. Ages 13 and up.



IMAGE

Kaya by Wes Craig (Mar. 28, $9.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5343-2482-4). Kaya's a brave big sister with magical powers who is determined to keep her little brother safe as they flee from evil across a land filled with monsters and other dangers. Ages 13 and up.

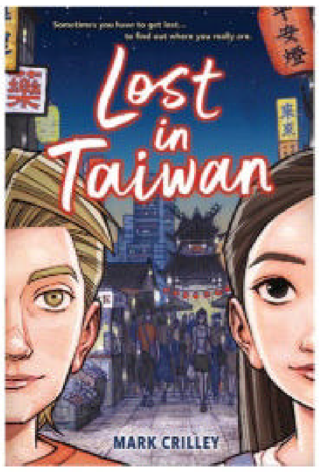
Reborn (Ava's Demon #1) by Michelle Fus (May 30, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5343-2438-1). A royal alien called Wraitha poses as a demon inside Ava, and together they must raise an army from the demons hiding in other ordinary folks to fight the evil Titan. Ages 13 and up.

IRON CIRCUS

Mage and the Endless Unknown by SJ Miller (June 10, $15, ISBN 978-1-63899-119-9) pulls readers into a grim dimension alongside a young mage who steps into an otherworldly landscape of dangers and may or may not find a way back home. Ages 15 and up.

LEGENDARY

The Witches of Silverlake by Simon Curtis (July 11, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68116-084-9). After Elliot moves to L.A. and attends a snobby private school, he's glad to have found some friends, even if they're a bit weird. As it turns out, they're witches, and the spells they cast threaten more than just social status destruction. Ages 15 and up.



LITTLE, BROWN

Lost in Taiwan by Mark Crilley (May 23, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-368-04099-0). It's a junior version of *Lost in Translation* when Paul, a teen American tourist, loses track of his brother in a crowded Taiwan shop and ventures nervously through the unfamiliar city to find him. Ages 14–18.

MAD CAVE

Nature's Labrynth by Zac Thompson and Bayleigh Underwood (July 19, 2023, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-952303-50-0). In a gamified island setting, criminals fight to the death to win a grand prize of cash and clearance of their records. But this round, someone unexpected is part of the game. Ages 13 and up.

ONI

Punch Up by Zachary Sterling (June 6, $15.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63715-217-1). Pitch, growing up without a family, is spoiling to fight in a big tournament alongside his hero pugilist—who might be more to Pitch than just an admirable bruiser. Ages 12 and up.

UTown by Caroline Breault (July 3, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63715-220-1). Creative types and other oddballs live in a neighborhood that up until now has stayed low-key, but money's moving in—and Samuel, a laid-back clerk and wannabe artist, has to quit dawdling and learn to deal. Ages 16 and up.

PLOUGH

By Water: The Felix Manz Story by Jason Landsel and Sankha Banerjee (Mar. 21, $19.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63608-053-6) continues the Christian inspirational Heroes of the Radical Reformation series with a graphic biography of Felix Manz, a Swiss nonviolent revolutionist religious leader persecuted in 16th century Europe. Ages 13–17.

RANDOM HOUSE GRAPHIC

Hidden Systems: Water, Electricity, the Internet, and the Secrets Behind the Systems We Use Every Day by Dan Nott (Mar. 14, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-984896-04-9) explains the utilities running behind walls, under streets, and zipping through the internet. Ages 12–18.

STREET NOISE

Unaccompanied: Stories of Brave Teenagers Seeking Asylum by Tracy White (Mar. 28, $18.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-951491-20-8) draws portraits of resilience based on interviews with teenage refugees from countries including El Salvador and Honduras, as well as the lawyers and activists who support them in the sometimes-hostile U.S. system. Ages 16 and up.

ASTRONEER
COUNTDOWN
EXCLUSIVE COSMETIC GAME CODE INSIDE!
DWONCH · GOODWIN · FAMFIL

TITAN COMICS

Countdown (Astroneer #1) by Dave Dwonch et al. (Mar. 28, $13.99, ISBN 978-1-78773-990-1). Seven, an Astroneer exploring planet Boreas, pockets a crystal from the surface and accidentally rips open the fabric of the universe in this comic series based on a video game. Ages 10–17.

Endless Space 2 Stories by Jeff Spock et al. (Feb. 7, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-78774-013-6). This comics anthology plays out original new stories set in the postapocalyptic universe of the video game *Endless Space 2*, where gods called the Endless once ruled and left behind a landscape of ruins. Ages 12 and up.

A WAVE BLUE WORLD

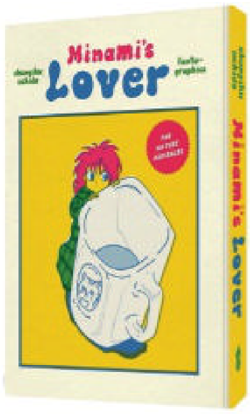
The Color of Always: An LGBTQIA+ Love Anthology, edited by Brent Fisher and Michele Abounader (June 6, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-949518-24-5), pulls together an array of queer love and romance memoir shorts from various comics creators. Ages 16 and up.

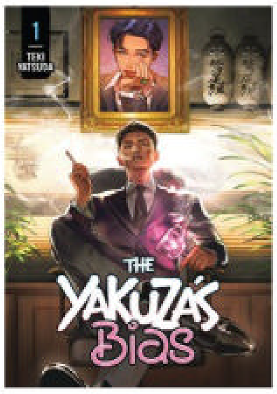
Manga

By Shaenon K. Garrity

The category is booming, as seen in the wide variety of manga and manga-influenced titles in the upcoming season, including newly translated classics, contemporary dramas, dark fantasy and SF, and LGBTQ memoir.

ミステリと言う勿れ
田村由美
1





TOP 5

Do Not Say Mystery
Yumi Tamura. Seven Seas, May 30 ($24.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68579-719-5)
In this offbeat mystery series from the creator of Basara and 7 Seeds, a young man becomes a detective after being accused of murder and sets out to clear his own name.

The Essence of Being a Muse
Aya Fumino. Yen, June 20 ($15 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9753-6097-9)
After being rejected from art school, a young woman tries to submit to her mother's pragmatic plans for her life but can't ignore her creative drive.

Minami's Lover
Shungiku Uchida. Fantagraphics, June 27 ($29.99, ISBN 978-1-68396-760-6)
Bestseller Uchida follows the unconventional relationship between two young people after one of them shrinks to six inches tall.

Until I Love Myself: The Journey of a Nonbinary Manga Artist
Poppy Pesuyama. Viz, June 20 ($12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9747-3884-7)
With honesty and humor, Pesuyama describes coming out as nonbinary in the manga industry and dealing with workplace sexual harassment.

The Yakuza's Bias
Teki Yatsuda, Kodansha, May 16 ($12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-64651-801-2)
A hard-bitten yakuza becomes a K-pop superfan after his boss's daughter drags him to a concert in this comedy.

ABLAZE

Centaurs by Ryo Sumiyoshi (July 11, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68497-136-7). In feudal Japan, centaurs, once worshipped as gods, now fight against human oppression.

Terror Man by Hangdong Woo and Kojin Ho (June 27, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68497-131-2). This hit Korean webcomic follows an antihero who can see trouble before it occurs.

DENPA

Renjoh Desperado by AhndongShik (Aug. 29, $12.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63442-821-7). In an alternate, Spaghetti western–influenced Japan, a wandering swordswoman searches for her perfect man but keeps finding trouble instead.

DRAWN & QUARTERLY

20 KM/H by Woshibai (May 16, $29.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-77046-669-2) collects silent comics from one of China's rising stars of alternative cartooning.

IMAGE

Hitomi by HS Tak and Isabella Mazzanti (May 30, $15.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-5343-2592-0). A young woman in feudal Japan secretly trains with a disgraced warrior in this dark action saga, inspired by Japanese historical drama.

KODANSHA

I Cross-Dressed for the IRL Meetup by Kurano (Aug. 15, $16.99 trade paper, 978-1-64651-783-1). “Cocoa” poses as a woman to join an all-girl group of online dessert gourmands, but when they start meeting in real life, his secret is sure to come out.

Lovely Muco by Takayuki Mizushina (Apr. 4, $16.95 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-64729-239-3) charts the comedic day-to-day adventures of a glassblower and his pet Shiba Inu.

Tsugumi Project by Ippatu (May 9, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-64651-789-3). In a postapocalyptic Japan devastated by nuclear war, a French soldier of fortune ventures into the radiation zone to search for a powerful weapon.

SATURDAY AM

Underground by JR De Bard (July 11, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-0-7603-8236-3). Seeking revenge against the gang that destroyed his Olympic dreams, a biracial taekwondo fighter takes on the underground mixed martial arts world.

SEVEN SEAS

The Eccentric Doctor of the Moon Flower Kingdom by Tohru Himuka (Mar. 14, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68579-455-2). The prince of the Moon Flower Kingdom meets a girl who practices a never-before-seen form of medicine in this fantasy inspired by Chinese drama.

The Great Snake's Bride by Totsuida Musume (July 18, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68579-655-6). In this adult fairy tale, a woman is sacrificed by her village to a snake god and unexpectedly learns to love him.

Homunculus by Hideo Yamamoto (June 27, $27.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68579-729-4). After submitting to a medical experiment, a homeless drifter sees visions that may come from his awakened sixth sense in this psychedelic horror series from the creator of *Ichi the Killer*.

The Invisible Man and His Soon-to-Be Wife by Iwatobineko (Feb. 28, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-68579-465-1). Yakou, a blind detective, and Tounome, her charming (but invisible) boss, are the unlikely crime-solving duo at the center of this mystery series.

The Invisible Man
& His Soon-to-Be Wife
VOLUME 1
STORY & ART BY IWATOBINEKO

Soloist in a Cage by Shiro Moriya (May 9, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63858-997-6). In this dystopian thriller, a girl escapes from a bleak prison city, then returns years later to rescue her younger brother.

STEAMSHIP

The Villainess and the Demon Knight by Nekoda and Seikan (Mar. 28, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-63858-896-2). A former noblewoman is rescued from a brothel by the mysterious and powerful Demon Knight in this adult bodice-ripper.

TITAN

Kamen Rider Zero-One by Brandon Easton and Hendry Prasetya (July 4, $17.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-78773-962-8). In this continuation of the classic Japanese tokusatsu series, Kamen Rider Zero-One takes on the mysterious Ragnarok.

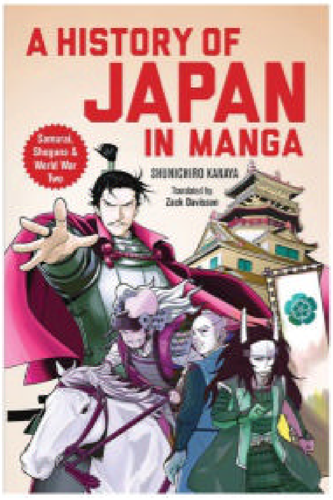
TOKYOPOP

At 30, I Realized I Had No Gender: Life Lessons from a 50-Year-Old After Two Decades of Self-Discovery by Shou Arai (June 13, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-4278-7345-3). Arai's manga memoir describes how they discovered, at age 30, that they were intersex, a revelation that caused them to reexamine society's ideas about gender and come out as trans.

Confessions of a Shy Baker by Masaomi Ito (Feb. 14, $13.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-4278-7256-2). A real estate company owner and amateur baker wants to advertise his company as LGBTQ friendly but worries about outing himself.

Guardian of Fukushima by Fabien Grolleau and Ewen Blain (Feb. 28, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-4278-7136-7). Drawing from Japanese art and folklore, this French graphic novel tells the true story of a farmer who returned to Fukushima to care for his animals after the 2011 nuclear accident.

Why I Adopted My Husband: The True Story of a Gay Couple Seeking Legal Recognition in Japan by Yuta Yagi (June 13, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-4278-7338-5). Yagi uses the comic-strip format to depict the barriers he and his husband face in Japan, where same-sex marriage is not recognized, and the loophole they found to gain basic legal and medical rights.



TUTTLE

A History of Japan in Manga: Samurai, Shoguns and World War II by Kanaya Shunichiro (Mar. 7, $18.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-4-8053-1670-2). This nonfiction account of Japan's history from its earliest recorded settlements to the present day combines text with manga recreations of historical moments.

VIZ

Boy's Abyss by Ryo Minemani (Apr. 25, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9747-3668-3). A teenager who feels trapped in his small town and a former idol singer struggling with depression are drawn to a river where two lovers once died in a double suicide.

Choujin X by Sui Ishida (Feb. 21, $14.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9747-3669-0). As the world is being destroyed by out-of-control superhumans, two friends decide to fight the monsters by joining their ranks in this dark action series from the creator of Tokyo Ghoul.

The Girl That Can't Get a Girlfriend by Mieri Hiranishi (Feb. 14, $16.99 trade paper, 978-1-9747-3659-1). Hiranishi's semiautobiographical manga describes her misadventures in college as she tries to find the butch girlfriend of her dreams.

Goodbye, Eri by Tatsuki Fujimoto (June 27, $12.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9747-3893-9). A filmmaker is pulled out of despair after his mother's death by a girl who enlists his help to make a film.

Tombs: Junji Ito Story Collection by Junji Ito (Mar. 28, $25, ISBN 978-1-9747-3604-1). This collection from horror master Ito includes stories about a town full of tombstones, a girl with a slug for a tongue, floating hairballs that broadcast people's secrets, and more.

WEBTOON

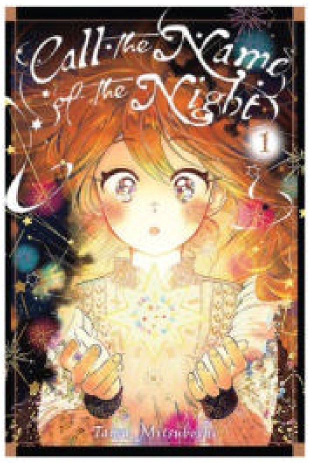
Doom Breaker by Deep Blue (July 25, $19.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-990259-74-6). A warrior is reincarnated into his own past as he battles the god of destruction in this gritty action series.

WILEY

Business Problem-Solving & Strategy: Manga for Success by Takayuki Kito and Keisuke Yamabe (Apr. 25, $22 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-394-17616-8). Wiley's new Manga for Success series teaches business and self-help topics through manga narratives. The entire series will be released globally in April, with titles dedicated to leadership, managing change, marketing, problem solving, and workplace psychology.

YEN

Call the Name of the Night by Tama Mitsuboshi (Mar. 21, $13 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9753-5200-4) follows the lives of two young women who live alone in the woods: Mira, who summons darkness when she becomes distressed, and Rei, a doctor determined to find a cure for her condition.



Call the Name of the Night
1
Tama Mitsuboshi

The Horizon by JH (June 20, $20 trade paper, ISBN 979-8-400900-29-7). From the creator of the Korean comic *The Boxer* comes a drama about love and loss.

Magical Girl Incident by Zero Akabane (May 23, $15 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9753-6036-8). An office worker's boring life turns into a gender-bending adventure after he gains the power to transform into a superpowered magical girl.

Me and My Beast Boss by Shiroinu (May 23, $13 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9753-6123-5). In a world ruled by beastfolk, a romance develops between a human woman and the beastly executive she works for.

Yokohama Station SF by Yuba Isukari and Tatsuyuki Tanaka (June 28, $9.99 trade paper, ISBN 978-1-9753-4418-4). These science fiction stories are set in a vast train station that has mysteriously consumed most of Japan. ■

Shaenon K. Garrity is a PW *comics reviewer and a writer, editor, and cartoonist best known for* Narbonic *and* Skin Horse.

Pushing the boundaries of graphic novels at the MIT Press

The Phantom Scientist
Robin Cousin
translated by Edward Gauvin

A mind-bending graphic novel that teases devious thrills from the mysteries of systems theory.

"An engaging, dryly funny read for armchair philosophers, disillusioned academics, and the unceasingly curious."
—*Library Journal*

graphic novels
February 21, 2023
8 1/2 x 11, 128 pp.
US $24.95T/$33.95 CAN cloth
978-0-262-04786-9

The Phantom Scientist
Robin Cousin
Now that the program's working, I just have to get it to give correct results.
Why does it say "Death of subject" at the end?
That's how the reports always end.
Must be a bug...
It's a bit freaky.

Goodbye to All That

In her new graphic memoir, *New Yorker* cartoonist Julia Wertz finds sobriety while rejecting redemption narratives

By Meg Lemke

PHOTO CREDIT

Julia Wertz doesn't play by the rules—not in her comics career, nor in her new graphic memoir, *Impossible People: A Completely Average Recovery Story* (Black Dog & Leventhal, May), which resists the norms of the addiction recovery genre. In the book, she wisecracks through an episodic account of isolation and alcohol abuse, and her stutter-start, winding path to sobriety.

Now a regular contributor to the *New Yorker*, Wertz started self-publishing her curmudgeonly diary comics online in 2004, in a series she ironically titled *Fart Party*. It's a choice she says she later regretted when the branding stuck. The omnibus collection of that series is being reissued in March as *Museum of Mistakes* (Uncivilized).

Caught up in the gold rush for graphic novels, Wertz signed a trade book deal, affording her time to draw. *Impossible People* opens in that period, as she hid out in an illegal basement apartment in Greenpoint, Brooklyn; drank heavily to soften the existential depression that arrived with twilight; and blacked out nightly. Intervention came in the form of a doctor who predicted she'd be "dead by 30." Vignettes follow her through rehab, a 12-step program, relapses, and a tentative path forward, buoyed by friends made along the way.

While the supporting cast are drawn in simple but evocative lines, Wertz portrays herself with an awkward, slightly deranged expression as she goofs through housing woes, bad boyfriends, worse breakups, and family traumas. It's all set against a gorgeously detailed pen-drawn backdrop of the architecture and odd fellows of Brooklyn and its burgeoning indie comics community in the 2010s.

"You know the Dunning-Kruger effect, where the less you know the more you think you know? That confidence that can come from ignorance can really benefit people," says Wertz, 40, on a video call from her drawing desk in "a room carved out of the garage" at her home in Sonoma, Calif., which she shares with her husband and young son. "I didn't know a lot about comics or publishing. I thought, I can't draw, but whatever—I'm going to do it anyway. Now, it's good to know the rules in the industry, but it's also good to know what rules you can fudge."

Wertz rattles off tales of how she misstepped her way into success, like when she brag posted her own comics to the grumps on the *Comics Journal* forum (a newbie no-no), or spontaneously cold emailed Black Dog & Leventhal publisher Becky Koh to pitch what became the 2018 Brendan Gill Prize–winning collection *Tenements, Towers, and Trash*, without alerting her own literary agent (who forgave her).

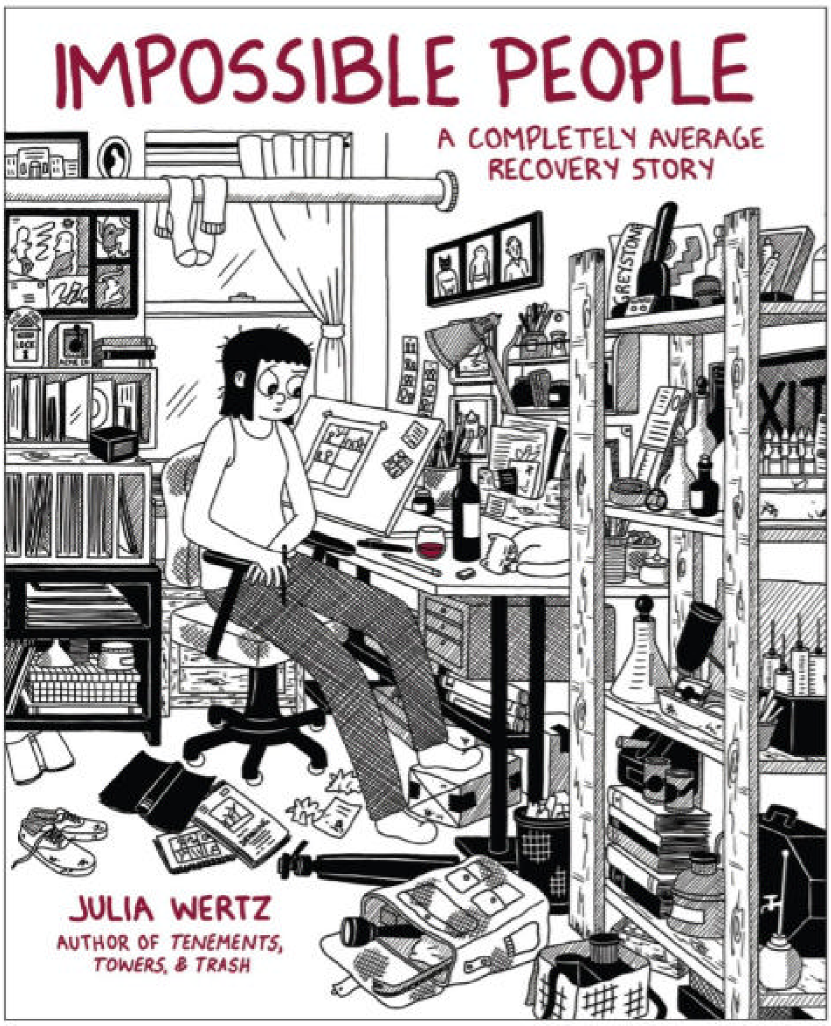
Impossible People returns to themes (addiction, illness, anxiety, creativity) that Wertz has limned across two prior graphic memoirs, 2010's *Drinking at the Movies* and 2012's *The Infinite Wait*. She jokes that fans think she just "tells the same stories at parties." But she spent a decade getting *Impossible People* and its arc just right.

"It's been percolating," Wertz says. "I had a whole other version, some 200 pages, that it hurt to put in the trash." Many of those drawings had been drafted in the midst of drinking, when "time moved differently" and she "missed a lot."

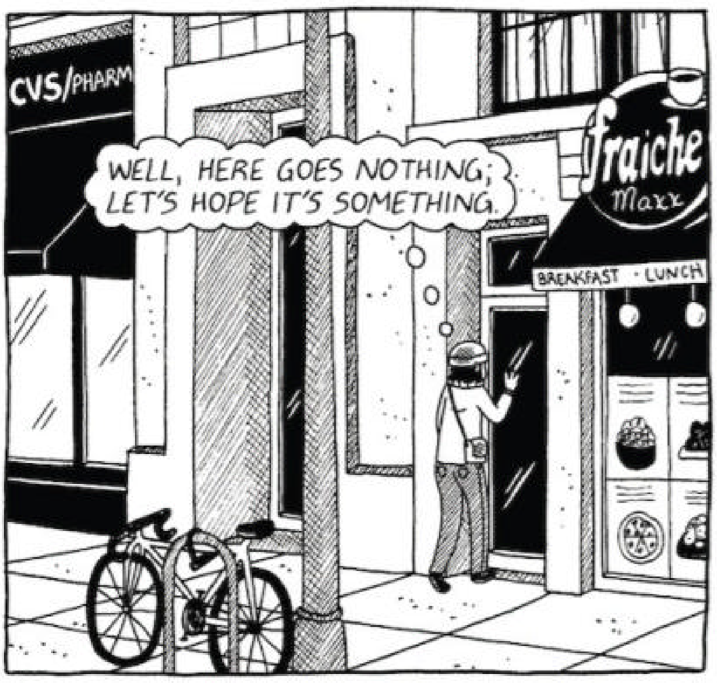
Despite being largely self-taught, Wertz has found herself in impressive company throughout her career, having been awarded two MacDowell fellowships and twice been nominated for the Eisner awards. She started out as a humanities student at San Francisco State in the early aughts—where, she caveats, "it's up for debate if I graduated; I never got a diploma." A professor there first introduced her to Junjo Ito's manga series *Uzumaki*, and she was immediately hooked.

"I fell in love with the art form and started writing and drawing my own comics," Wertz says. "And they were very, very dumb."

Through trading photocopied zines, Wertz connected with peers who were leveling up their skills. After moving to New York City, she cofounded a studio in an old candy factory; it drew a group of women cartoonists who called the space Pizza Island. The women brought together at Pizza Island—including Kate Beaton (*Ducks*), Sarah Glidden (*Rolling Blackouts*), Meredith Gran (*Octopus Pie*), and Lisa Hanawalt (*Tuca and Bertie*)—would prove to be a talented bunch and would form a lasting support network. For Wertz, they were essential both to her recovery process and artistic career. "Cartoonists are a weird breed—homebodies who tend to have social anxiety but are smart and funny," she says.


IMPOSSIBLE PEOPLE
A COMPLETELY AVERAGE RECOVERY STORY
GREYSTONE
EXIT
JULIA WERTZ
AUTHOR OF TENEMENTS, TOWERS, & TRASH

Though Wertz says she "hates drawing people," she became adept at scenery, taking long walks and sketching Greenpoint. She created so many pages of bodega storefronts and wood-frame row houses that they couldn't all fit into *Tenements*, a collection of drawings of urban architecture, and she repurposed some as scenery in *Impossible People*, slotting her characters in on their period set.


CVS/PHARM
WELL, HERE GOES NOTHING; LET'S HOPE IT'S SOMETHING.
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Maxx
BREAKFAST · LUNCH

Wertz captures the feel of New York City streets in detailed backdrops.

New Yorker cartoon editor Emma Allen publishes Wertz's work on the magazine's online platform, and calls herself "an obsessive fan" of Wertz's "brilliant, Dada, goofy humor." However "crass and sarcastic" Wertz gets, Allen finds her cartoons "relatable, like the banter of a best friend," and "sincere without ever being sentimental."

Impossible People is the first graphic memoir published by Black Dog & Leventhal. Koh says she eagerly signed it after the "tremendous success" of *Tenements*, which was a *New York Times* notable book of the year. "What I love about Julia is just how genuinely she presents herself," Koh says. "There's no BS; there's no artifice."

For example, in *Impossible People*, Wertz doesn't shy away from critiquing AA, though she maintains the anonymity of people she met in the program, unless they gave her explicit permission to name them. "It saves people's lives, but still I think it needs to be completely overhauled," she explains, pointing to problems with the ways the program creates space for women. Nonetheless, she hopes readers take away that what AA can do is "sit you down and say, 'Cut the shit. Be a real person, stop being sarcastic, have a real conversation about what's going on.' "

An "ordinary recovery story," per Wertz, doesn't follow a clear path from rock bottom to salvation. She's frustrated by popular narratives that skew toward dramatic highs and lows. Her story, she hopes, is low-key in a way that's true to life—where relapses are part of a cycle that can be surmounted, even if it takes a few rounds. Mistakes get made.

"When I started drawing *Impossible People*, I was single, an alcoholic, and living alone in a basement in New York City," Wertz says. "When I finished it a decade later, I was married, a mother, and living in a house in California. But if you would have told me that in 2011, I never would have believed it." The biggest challenge in recreating her struggles on the page, she says, was drawing her own actions and wondering, "Why did it take me so long to stop doing this?"

"People would give me advice, and I wouldn't follow it," Wertz says. "I would just do what I wanted to do, and recovery requires that you realize that what you want to do is probably not the right thing."

Maybe, she hopes, telling her ordinary story will help someone else who's struggling—help them realize what isn't working, "if they need that push." ■

Reviews

Fiction

★ Our Best Intentions

Vibhuti Jain. Morrow, $27.99 (352p) ISBN 978-0-06-327878-3

Jain's riveting debut centers on a stabbing at a high school in affluent Westchester County, N.Y. While on the way to swimming practice, sophomore Angela Singh discovers her crush, Henry McCleary, collapsed and bleeding. After realizing he's been stabbed, she calls 911. As the story unfolds from various characters' points of view, the question is not who stabbed Henry but why. Students, though, are quick to vilify Henry's assailant, Chiara Thomkins, a Black girl enrolled at the school who's been squatting on campus. As Henry, who is white, recuperates in the hospital, Chiara goes missing, and the McClearys' lawyer disparages Chiara for having used her cousin's address to attend the school. Henry, meanwhile, hides the fact that he and his friend Chris met Chiara to buy weed from her, and that Chris mocked her for being "homeless," held her down, and went through her bag. Also in the mix is Angela's father, Babur, an Uber driver and immigrant from India who has built up a fleet of cars to afford living in the school district for Angela's benefit, and who worries Angela's role in the affair will hurt her future. Jain excels at revealing each character's motivations and fears, and at how easily the truth can be distorted. This page-turner will stay with readers. *Agent: Alexa Stark, Trident Media Group. (Mar.)*

Wandering Souls

Cecile Pin. Holt, $26.99 (240p) ISBN 978-1-250-86346-1

Pin follows three refugees out of Vietnam to England in her powerful debut. In 1978, Thi Anh, 16, and two younger brothers, Minh and Thanh, survive the treacherous journey to Hong Kong, but their parents and four younger siblings drown, events prefigured in Pin's matter-of-fact opening line: "There are the goodbyes and then the fishing out of the bodies—everything in between is speculation." Anh is bitter about her uncle in the U.S., who urged her family to flee and told them stories of his life in New Haven, Conn., and lies to aid workers, saying they have no family abroad. Months later, they are resettled in Sopley, England, and struggle to adjust while waiting for public housing. As the years pass, Anh works in a garment factory, Minh and Thanh progress through school with varying degrees of success—Minh drops out and deals drugs, Thanh finishes his A-levels, but abandons his plans for university, fearing his grades aren't good enough for scholarships. Pin smoothly juggles Anh's narrative with snippets of speeches and news reports that provide conflicting views of Margaret Thatcher's policies toward refugees, as well chapters from the perspectives of the ghost of a younger brother, refugees who are sexually assaulted in Thailand, and a narrator—unidentified until the end—who feels great pressure to do justice to their family's experiences. With concision and clarity, the author shows a deep understanding of how upheaval can splinter families. *(Mar.)*

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In Vibhuti Jain's Our Best Intentions, *a crime brings into focus racial and class tensions at an affluent high school (reviewed on this page).*

The Nursery

Szilvia Molnar. Pantheon, $26 (208p) ISBN 978-0-593-31684-9

Molnar's entrancing debut captures the volatile inner life of a woman with postpartum depression. The narrator, a literary translator, feels isolated while caring for her baby girl, Button, and, as her days blur into each other, she has a hard time seeing herself as more than a "milk bar," and her mind frequently reverts to thoughts of hurting Button. Molnar braids the narrator's gloomy reflections on motherhood ("Women have done this before me and nothing changed. And women will do this after me") with accounts of visits from an elderly neighbor who is mourning the death of his wife, and interactions with her husband, John. In one of the most powerful passages, the narrator studies John and finds him completely unchanged while her body has been torn apart, her career put on hold, and her time fully dedicated to raising her daughter. Though it's unclear how some of the pieces are meant to fit, such as the visits from the neighbor, Molnar brings a cutting verisimilitude to her portrayal of the narrator's fuzzy state of mind, and she's equally unsparing with her vivid descriptions of childbirth, recovery, and the physical demands of early motherhood. It amounts to a powerful look at what a new mother endures. *Agent: Kate Johnson, Wolf Literary. (Mar.)*

The Dog of the North

Elizabeth McKenzie. Penguin Press, $27 (336p) ISBN 978-0-593-30069-5

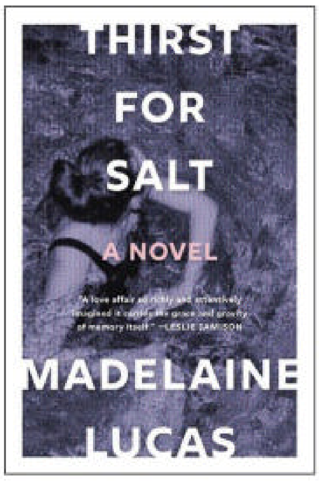
A grieving woman navigates a series of misadventures in the endearing and quirky latest from McKenzie (*The Portable Veblen*). Five years earlier, Penny Rush's mother and stepfather disappeared while traveling in the Australian outback. When Penny Rush learns her grandmother, known mainly as Dr. Pincer, has threatened her Meals on Wheels delivery person with a gun at her Santa Barbara house, Penny quits her dead-end job and takes the train from Santa Cruz to help keep Pincer safe from the prying eyes at Adult Protective Services. She's also relieved to have something to get her mind off her missing mother. There, she befriends Pincer's kooky accountant, Burt Lampey. As Penny arranges for a cleaning crew to fix up Pincer's house, she gets a call from her grandfather Arlo's much-younger wife, who complains Arlo is "too old to be of use." Along the way, Penny gets help from Burt, who drives a van named the Dog of the North and has a

Pomeranian called Kweecoats (“like Quick Oats, but with a French accent,” Burt explains). There’s also a trip to Australia, unexpected visits from Penny’s biological father, and the discovery of a skeleton. With the anxious and well-meaning Penny at the helm, McKenzie brings sincerity to the otherwise zany proceedings. This whirlwind tale has heart to spare. *Agent: Emily Forland, Brandt & Hochman Literary. (Mar.)*

Thirst for Salt

Madelaine Lucas. Tin House, $16.95 trade paper (272p) ISBN 978-1-953534-65-1

Australian writer Lucas’s intelligent debut tracks a love affair between a young woman and an older man. The unnamed narrator, now 37, reflects on the “pause” in her life between graduating from college at 24 and “whatever would happen next.” She recounts a seaside vacation with her mother from that time, when she meets a local named Jude, 42. Soon, the two are sleeping together, and after she returns to her apartment in Sydney, they stay in touch, and she visits Jude on weekends before deciding to quit her part-time bookselling job and move in with him. The two adopt a stray dog and spend months living in bliss, but when the narrator suspects Jude of having feelings for an older female friend, and he bristles at the idea of introducing the narrator to his mother, the narrator second-guesses her devotion to him. There’s not much of a plot involving this well-trod story of a fractured love affair, but Lucas keenly captures the relationship’s slow erosion, as well as the narrator’s ability to make sense of her past while looking back on it. The author’s psychological acuity will keep readers piqued. *Agent: Samantha Shea, George Borchardt Inc. (Mar.)*



Monstrilio

Gerardo Sámano Córdova. Zando, $27 (336p) ISBN 978-1-63893-036-5

A monster takes the place of a dead child in Mexican writer Sámano Córdova’s sly and unsettling debut. Santiago, 11, dies from an unspecified illness while convalescing in Upstate New York. “Her son was alive, and now he isn’t. How dull,” the author writes of Magos, the mother, who feels robbed of a sense of drama: she’d previously imagined Santiago dying in her arms in a crowded mall as she became “a Pietá.” She keeps a piece of his lung in a jar as a memento mori, and when they return to Mexico City, the family’s housekeeper tells Magos a story about a woman who kept and fed a young child’s heart and another child grew in its place. Magos then spoons some broth into the jar, and by the following morning, the lung has begun growing. Magos keeps feeding the lung until it breaks out of the jar, then bites off part of her thumb. Eventually, the lung grows to be the size of a child, and Magos names him Monstrilio. Her husband gets Monstrilio a cat tower for him to perch on, though their creation proves less domesticated than they’d hoped. While the prose is a bit flat, Sámano Córdova does a good job elucidating the contours of grief and love. This creepy work of psychological horror gives readers plenty to chew on. *(Mar.)*

Breakwater

Marijke Schermer, trans. from the Dutch by Liz Waters. World Editions, $17.99 trade paper (192p) ISBN 978-1-6428-6125-9

A woman’s tranquil life is disrupted by a traumatic memory in Schermer’s haunting latest (after *Love, If That’s What It Is*). Emilia, a 40-something sociologist, travels to Amsterdam with her doctor husband, Bruch, from their remote country house to attend a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. After the show, an oafish, overzealous acquaintance surprises Emilia, covering her eyes and mouth with his hands, and triggering a memory of her rape 12 years earlier. After the couple returns home, Emilia tries to maintain a semblance of normalcy by gardening, taking their boys to school, and working on reports. But she’s riddled with anxiety as she wrestles with her trauma and whether to tell her husband about the attack, which took place shortly after they’d started dating. Then, on the drive home after visiting her brother (and having taken a Valium), she narrowly escapes a collision. Bruch, meanwhile, jokingly accuses her of having an affair, though it turns out he’s hiding something. In a stunning ending, Emilia’s secrets and Bruch’s lies come to the surface with staggering consequences for the marriage. Schermer’s complex psychological study illuminates what it means to be human. *(Apr.)*

Stay This Day and Night with Me

Belén Gopegui, trans. from the Spanish by Mark Schafer. City Lights, $16.95 trade paper (208p) ISBN 978-0-87286-893-9

Spanish writer Gopegui explores the relationship between humans and AI in her thoughtful English-language debut. Mateo, 22, applies to a college program at Google and enlists the help of Olga, an older woman who owns a small tech company. He’d begun an application sometime earlier, he tells her, and receives regular emails from an AI bot who encourages him to finish, prompting Olga to suggest they write an application that will get the attention of an actual person. The rest of the narrative consists

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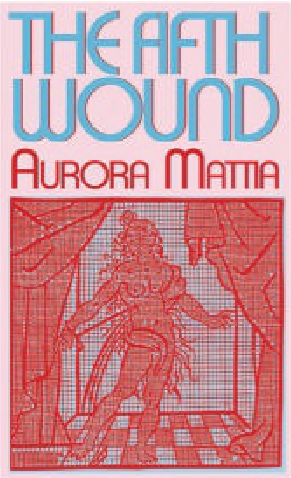
of their letter to Google, which often digresses into philosophical questions about existence informed by literary references (“All people who exist are alike, the ones who don’t exist don’t exist each in their own way”). Interspersed with these musings are scenes of Olga and Matteo hashing out their ideas in Olga’s apartment, with moments of tension as Matteo considers a cyber attack on Google, which Olga puts the brakes on. Gopegui leavens the high-mindedness with a cool sense of irony, and shines with her succinct insights on the similarities between humans and AI (“health apps that turn people into toasters”). Readers will be intrigued. *(Mar.)*

The Fifth Wound

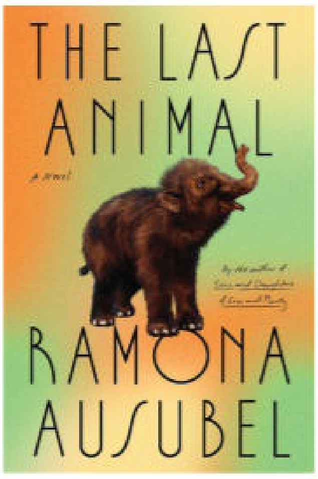
Aurora Mattia. Nightboat, $17.95 trade paper (270p) ISBN 978-1-64362-148-7

Mattia flouts genre conventions with a fierce debut about love, trauma, and the publishing industry’s gatekeepers. The narrator, Aurora, a trans writer who lives in Brooklyn, misses Ezekiel, a friend and lover from college, and casts their relationship in mythopoetic terms (“Heathcliff, it’s me,” she addresses him in her narration). Mattia suffuses the narrative with a flood of memories, references to tortured love songs by Townes Van Zandt (the “foremost voice” in Aurora’s head), and threads of erotic text messages. Before Aurora travels to Austin to visit Ezekiel, her narration veers into her recollections of self-harm. The descriptions are graphic and unflinching, as is her account of injuries to her surgically created vagina, which she also renders with poetic allusions (“A wound is a mouth without a tongue”). As Aurora continues to consider a reunion with Ezekiel, she lashes out at rejections by agents and editors who haven’t grasped her work (“Your writing is as striking, original, and weird as it comes. But it’s also delicate, and makes me slow down as a reader, which is rare,” one agent writes). Here, Aurora’s biting voice is undeniable: “There is nothing more boring than explaining yourself to someone who thinks they want to know you.” Lovers of experimental fiction will find what they’re looking for. *(Mar.)*



★ The Last Animal

Ramona Ausubel. Riverhead, $27 (288p) ISBN 978-0-593-42052-2



The Ice Age meets the Anthropocene in this gem from Ausubel (*Sons and Daughters of Ease and Plenty*), centered on a scientist’s improbable attempt to revive an extinct species. A research trip brings Jane, a recently widowed graduate student, to the permafrost of Siberia, along with her two daughters, Eve, 15, and Vera, 12. Since their father died, Jane has thrown herself into work, and the girls would rather be anywhere than Siberia. Then the miraculous discovery of a baby mammoth preserved in ice brings them together. Back home in San Francisco, Jane shares her discovery with Helen, a glamorous amateur zookeeper who lives with zebras and giraffes on her husband’s estate on Lake Como. Soon, Jane and Helen hatch a plan to impregnate Helen’s pet elephant with a genetically modified embryo based on the baby mammoth’s DNA. Supporting players include a group of beardy professor-scientists in zip-off cargo pants who believe resurrecting the planet’s long-lost megafauna will heal the misdeeds of generations, and an Icelandic boy toy who catalyzes a perfectly reckless moment of teenage rebellion for Eve. Ausubel is at her best when exploring the ties that bind, especially in a family flung into unprecedented circumstances. In charting the parallel worlds of grief, scientific devotion, and adolescence, Ausubel comes up with a seamless global caper that brims with compassion and makes the reader glad to be alive. *Agent: PJ Mark, Janklow & Nesbit Assoc. (Apr.)*

Hello Beautiful

Ann Napolitano. Dial, $28 (400p) ISBN 978-0-593-24373-2

Napolitano (*Dear Edward*) explores the meaning of love and family with this striking story of four Chicago sisters and the young man who enters their lives. William Waters, a basketball player from outside Boston, enrolls at Northwestern in 1978 on an athletic scholarship. After he starts dating fellow student Julia Padavano, he’s embraced by Julia’s three younger sisters—Sylvie, a romantic searching for a great love affair; Cecelia, an aspiring artist; and Cecelia’s earnest and quiet twin, Emeline—and is delighted to find a loving and loud family so different from his own, his parents having grown taciturn after his older sister’s death years before. William and Julia marry, while the unmarried Cecelia gets pregnant at 17, Sylvie presses on with a job at a library, and Emeline works at a daycare where she fosters a crush on a coworker. After one character attempts suicide, the bonds of the expanding family are tested, and the Padavano women reexamine the limits of how much they’re willing to sacrifice. The author breathes great life into her characters, and brings insight into their quiet moments as they gradually come into their own. This will move readers. *Agent: Julie Barer, Book Group. (Mar.)*

The Last Carolina Girl

Meagan Church. Sourcebooks Landmark, $16.99 trade paper (320p) ISBN 978-1-72825-715-0

Church debuts with a dynamic and wrenching tale of family secrets and eugenics. Leah Payne’s mother died in childbirth, and when her lumberjack father dies in 1935, she’s taken away at 14 from her rural North Carolina home and forced to work as a “helpmate” for the Griffins, a well-off family near Charlotte. A closet-size bedroom on the back porch, verbal abuse, and a slap from Mrs. Griffin make Leah feel unwanted in her new home. She tries to befriend the Griffin children, but Mrs. Griffin keeps her isolated and busy with chores. She isn't allowed to go to school, and is generally viewed as a problem. Then a local doctor, who advocates for the forced sterilization of the "feebleminded," takes Leah as a patient at Mrs. Griffin's urging. The plot surges toward a powerful crescendo with an action that is both cruel and savage, and a revelation of Mrs. Griffin's secrets. The author effectively dramatizes historical injustice in this searing tale, and adds lush details to descriptions of Leah's life before Charlotte. Church is off to a strong start. *Agent: Rachel Cone-Gorham, RXD Agency. (Mar.)*

Once We Were Home

Jennifer Rosner. Flatiron, $27.99 (288p) ISBN 978-1-250-85554-1

Rosner (*The Yellow Bird Sings*) delivers an engrossing story inspired by the post-war lives of Jewish children who were hidden during the war. Seven-year-old Roger spent most of the war growing up in safety at the Convent of Sainte Marie de Sion, but in 1946, the church insists on keeping him, prompting Roger's aunt to sue for custody. A parallel narrative follows siblings Ana and Oskar, whose parents send them to the Polish countryside. Near the war's end, they're taken by a Jewish woman reclaiming Jewish children to live in Israel, which excites Ana but upsets the younger Oskar, who's grown attached to their foster parents. Twenty years later, Roger, now a professor in Israel, meets Renata, a British archeologist. They're drawn to each another, but their romance is derailed when Renata reveals her parents were German. Ana, meanwhile, lives in a kibbutz with her husband, who wants to raise their children there, but Ana would rather leave the community; while Oskar falls in love with a talented violinist. When the siblings learn their foster mother is ill, they consider returning to Poland, and surprising revelations about Renata's past explain why her family left Germany during the war. Rosner wrings a great deal of emotion from the various portraits, and she does an admirable job of exploring the characters' conflicted loyalties. Fans of Jewish historical fiction will be moved. *(Mar.)*

Her Lost Words: A Novel of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley

Stephanie Marie Thornton. Berkley, $17 trade paper (448p) ISBN 978-0-593-19842-1

Thornton (*A Most Clever Girl*) chronicles the lives of two pioneering authors in this stirring narrative. Mary Wollstonecraft is introduced in 1775 as a teenager who is hungry, homeless, and bloodied at the hands of her father, having tried to protect her mother. She's rescued by a family friend, Mrs. Clare, a reverend's wife who had previously nurtured the girl's yearning for knowledge by slipping her a new book to read every Sunday. Reverend Clare does his part to help Wollstonecraft find a better life by getting her a governess job. Wollstonecraft's first position is short-lived, after she persuades her charges that their education is more important than finding a spouse, but her independent spirit eventually leads to literary success and influence. She dies in 1797 while giving birth to Mary, who adopts her mother's perspectives on equal treatment for women and the importance of lifelong learning. Mary eventually marries poet and philosopher Percy Shelley, and writes the novel *Frankenstein* at 18, about a monster whose anger, fear, and sadness reflects her own inner turmoil. Thornton brings a sense of urgency to the women's inner lives, as well as a fair amount of insight into their work. Much has been written about the authors, but Thornton does justice to their singular lives. *Agent: Kevan Lyon, Marsal Lyon Literary Agency. (Mar.)*

Mystery/Thriller

The Rescue

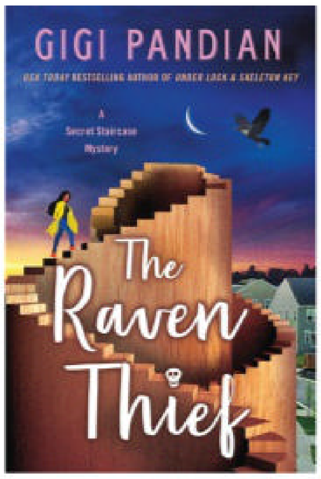
T. Jefferson Parker. Forge, $28.99 (352p) ISBN 978-1-250-79356-0

Much of this quirky standalone from bestseller Parker (*A Thousand Steps*) is told from the viewpoint of Joe, a dog trained by the DEA to sniff out drugs but later retired from the agency. Joe is now in Tijuana, Mexico, with "the Roman," who uses the animal's incredible nose to help one cartel rob another. In a heist gone wrong, Joe is shot, rescued by a Tijuana kid, and healed by a local vet. Joe is adopted by Bettina Blazak, an American reporter in Laguna Beach, Calif., who writes a story about the dog that goes viral, attracting all kinds of attention. Teddy Delgado, a San Diego boy who raised Joe as a puppy, wants him back, as does the Roman. The robbed cartel wants to steal him—and the DEA wants to use Bettina and Joe to attack the cartels. The tough, stubborn Bettina is determined to keep Joe, though bargaining with a Mexican cartel seems like a fool's errand. Readers will delight in the highly anthropomorphized Joe, but some may find the marriage of "dog lit" and violent thriller to be a bit awkward. Fans of Spencer Quinn's Chet and Bernie mysteries will want to check this out. *(Apr.)*

★ The Raven Thief: A Secret Staircase Mystery

Gigi Pandian. Minotaur, $26.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-250-80501-0

In Pandian's excellent sequel to 2022's *Under Lock & Skeleton Key*, magician Tempest Raj, whose parents run Secret Staircase Construction, a company that builds houses with such accoutrements as secret passageways and sliding bookcases, witnesses a crime marked by multiple impossibilities at a séance. Lavinia Kingsley is seeking to eradicate all traces of her ex-husband, author Corbin Colt, from her California home. She retains a conjuror, the Hindi Houdini, to lead a fake séance. But in the middle of the proceedings, Colt's corpse is dropped onto the séance table, a knife sticking out of his chest and black raven feathers scattered about, an apparent reference to Colt's book, *The Raven*. But the knife is fake, Colt was on a livestream moments before and miles away from where his corpse landed, and there seems to be no rational way for his body to have reached its destination. Pandian's clever solution matches the challenge she sets for her endearingly imperfect lead. This brilliant homage to classic golden age authors such as John Dickson Carr augurs well for a long series run. *Agent: Jill Marsal, Marsal Lyon Literary (Mar.)*



Woman of the Year

Darcey Bell. Atria/Bestler, $17 trade paper (240p) ISBN 978-1-9821-7730-0

Lorelei Green, the reticent 40-year-old narrator of this enjoyable if initially slow psychological thriller from bestseller Bell (*All I Want*), is pleased to be associated with the American Feline Protection Society after a video went viral showing her cat sinking its claws into a man who attacked her, reducing him to "a whimpering wreck." But Lorelei hasn't always been so fortunate. Flashback 20 years to New England's Woodward University, where students Lorelei and Holly Snopes become fast friends in an interpersonal relations class involving confessional group therapy. Both Lorelei and Holly fall under the charismatic spell of their charming professor, who it turns out is conducting a mind control experiment. The result is emotional trauma for Lorelei, who drops out of Woodward with reason to blame Holly. In the present, Holly, now a philanthropist, is being honored at a Woman of the Year benefit in New York, and Lorelei plans to ruin Holly's moment by putting something in her food to cause an allergic reaction. But someone else is plotting a worse revenge on Holly. Assured storytelling keeps the reader turning the pages. This clever tale of friendship, trust, and betrayal should win Bell new fans. *(Mar.)*

Good Dog, Bad Cop

David Rosenfelt. Minotaur, $27.99 (288p) ISBN 978-1-250-82896-5

In Edgar finalist Rosenfelt's appealing fourth K Team novel (after 2022's *Citizen K-9*), the K Team—retired police detective Corey Douglas and other PIs who consult on cold cases for the Paterson, N.J., PD—look into the execution-style murder of police detective Danny Avery. Despite a lack of evidence, Corey is certain there's a link between this case and the subsequent deaths of Danny's mentor, former detective Jimmy Dietrich, and Danny's wife, who were both killed on Jimmy's boat. No one was ever arrested for this latter case, and cop gossip put the deaths down to a murder suicide, with Jimmy pulling the trigger. The K Team's investigations lead Corey down a rabbit hole as the list of deaths and suspects grows, and no one is who they claim to be. The complicated, fair play mystery presents just the right amount of difficulty for the keen-eyed reader to solve. Corey's musings and digressions on such topics as marriage and dogs add to the charm, as does Corey's German shepherd partner, Simon Garfunkle (also retired), who acts like a real dog and only once jumps at someone threatening his master's life. Rosenfelt reliably entertains. *Agent: Robin Rue, Writers House. (Mar.)*

All the Queen's Spies

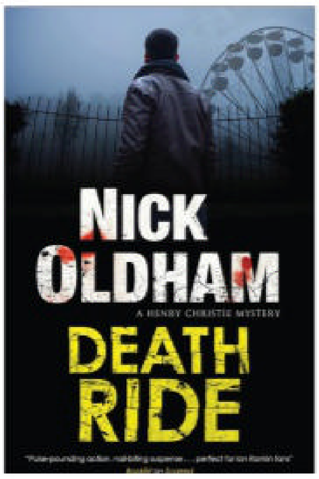
Oliver Clements. Atria, $27.99 (400p) ISBN 978-1-9821-9746-9

Set in 1583, Clements's strong third Agents of the Crown thriller featuring real-life mathematician, occultist, and alchemist John Dee (after 2021's *The Queen's Men*) opens with an arresting sentence: "When John Dee thinks about it later, when he is crouched covered in blood in the stern of a fluyt and watching the coast of Kent disappear forever into the sea mist, he wonders again why he had ever supposed, even for a solitary instant, that this could or would have ever ended otherwise." Flashbacks reveal the mission that put Dee in this situation. Spymaster Francis Walsingham wants Dee to befriend Count Olbrecht Łaski, a confidante of Rudolf, the Holy Roman Emperor, who's an admirer of Dee's. That relationship is hoped to lead to the count serving as Walsingham's eyes and ears in the emperor's court, as England remains under threat from an ally of the Holy Roman Empire. Dee's efforts take him to Prague and place his life in peril. Clements's version of a vulnerable Dee contrasts nicely with fictional heroes of this period, and he maintains a high level of tension throughout. S.J. Parris fans will find a lot to like. *Agent: Lisa Gallagher, Defiore & Co. (Mar.)*

Death Ride

Nick Oldham. Severn, $30.99 (224p) ISBN 978-1-4483-0695-4

At the start of Oldham's riveting 30th Henry Christie thriller (after 2022's *Demolition*), retired police detective Christie, who now runs a combined pub and hotel in the English village of Kendleton and has been "press-ganged" into manning the information booth at the Kendleton Country Fair, approaches a couple arguing near the booth, where parents can inquire about lost children. Stepdad Dave West isn't worried, but his wife, Melinda West, is, because Charlotte Kirkham, Melinda's 13-year-old daughter, is missing and not answering her phone. Melinda's alarm is magnified by her having witnessed a group of rowdy teenage boys harassing her daughter a short time before at the showground. Christie agrees to help and finds that one of the boys is the son of Leonard Lennox, who's operating a food truck at the fair. Christie recalls that, in the early 1990s, he sent Lennox away for 12 years after Lennox abducted an eight-year-old girl in broad daylight. He assists former colleague Det. Sgt. Debbie Blackstone in the search for Charlotte, which proves unexpectedly complicated. Oldham makes Christie's involvement credible while maintaining a nail-biting level of suspense. Despite its age, this series still has plenty of life left. *Agent: Olav Wyper, SMS Talent (U.K.). (Mar.)*



Even When You Lie

Michelle Cruz. Crooked Lane, $17.99 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-63910-250-1

Early in Cruz's uneven debut, a romantic thriller, a young woman dies after leaving an envelope for defense attorney Cade McCarrick at Holcombe & Donaldson, a prestigious Dallas law firm. Though warned to leave the matter alone, Reagan Reyes, the firm's private investigator and a former intelligence officer, discovers the envelope's contents relate to a recent murder outside a nightclub. Despite the risk of exposing her romantic relationship with Cade—expressly forbidden by the firm's rules—Reagan investigates further, assisted by Rafi, a former Army Ranger who's now homeless. When Reagan uncovers a connection between the Holcombes, the firm's wealthy and well-connected owners, and the woman's death and the earlier murder, Reagan and Cade become targets of a killer who has woven a web of deceit to disguise the murders' true motives. Blood ties and money are at the heart of the matter, and the tension rises along with the body count. Though all the components of a romantic thriller are in place—an adventurous young woman, a dashing love interest, a fast car, and a city riddled with corruption—they generate neither passion nor action. Intriguingly flawed secondary characters suggest Cruz can do better next time. *Agent: Jessica Faust, BookEnds Literary. (Mar.)*

Hunting Rabbits

Mark Gilleo. 2020 Press, $14.99 trade paper (342p) ISBN 978-0-9990472-6-2

At the start of this taut thriller set in Virginia from Gilleo (*Out Tupelo*), an attempted robbery of a Walgreens is thwarted by a bystander who managed to disarm the robber, who escaped. When the Glock the robber abandoned is tested for fingerprints, the police are stunned that it matches a print from an unsolved series of murders. During a six-month period in the 1970s, four female students at the College of William & Mary were killed near Lake Matoaka. Despite a massive investigation, the murderer was never caught. The only evidence as to his identity was a bloody fingerprint lifted from a Walkman belonging to the final victim, Heather Gates, who was stabbed 11 times. Heather happens to have been the younger sister of Charlie Gates, now the Williamsburg, Va., police chief, who grasps at the chance of belated justice. The case takes an odd turn when the robber is found and proves to be much too young to have been the Matoaka murderer. Gilleo is especially good at imbuing his leads with psychological depth. Peter Colt fans will appreciate the combination of suspenseful plot twists and thoughtful characterizations. *(Self-published)*

SF/Fantasy/Horror

★ The Helios Syndrome

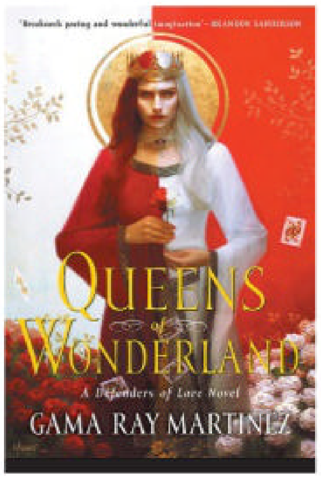
Vivian Shaw. Lethe, $13 trade paper (142p) ISBN 978-1-59021-537-1

The occult features heavily in this cool little adventure from Shaw (*Strange Practice*). "Freelance necromancer" Devin Stacy works with the National Transportation Safety Board, and more specifically hard-boiled Chief Investigator Wayne Dooley, to find aircraft crash sites and uncover the causes of the aircraft failures by interviewing the dead. Things become more complex when the ghost of Captain Warner, who recently died in a horrific crash, starts to haunt Sandy as he investigates an aircraft that has disappeared. Shaw has a tremendous gift for taking subject material that is both niche and, in this case, involving a not-insubstantial amount of physics, and making it fun and fascinating enough to captivate readers, whether or not they have any background in aviation or the occult. The story circles in on questions of what good or evil lurks in the cosmos, but softens the intensity with talking airplanes and magical hijinks. Fast paced, complex, and brilliant, this entirely original novella is sure to win fans. *Agent: Stephen Barbara, InkWell Management. (Apr.)*

Queens of Wonderland

Gama Ray Martinez. Harper Voyager, $27.99 (320p) ISBN 978-0-06-301468-8

Martinez's lackluster second Defenders of Lore fantasy novel (after 2022's *God of Neverland*) has versions of J.M. Barrie's creations interact with some of Lewis Carroll's characters, but the conceit can't make up for weak characterizations and an overreliance on uninspired action sequences. The Knights of the Round were established to protect humanity from "mystical threats." Michael Darling, of *Peter Pan* fame, is demoted by that order, after his obsession with thwarting Captain Hook, who's unleashed "an army of ghosts" on London, costs innocent lives. But even this won't put him off Hook's scent. His pursuit takes a surprising turn when Darling learns the pirate has crossed into Wonderland. Fortunately, the White Lady, a master of magical arts including divination and prophecy and one of the leaders of the Knights of the Round, agrees to accompany Darling and his friends into that realm and reveals herself to be an expert on Wonderland from her time spent there back when she went by Alice. The group encounters predictable dangers and only slightly reimagined takes on classic figures such as the Cheshire Cat. The result is an uninspired mash-up of well-loved worlds with little to say about any of them. *(Apr.)*



Trine

Chris Faraday. Angry Robot, $16.99 trade paper (400p) ISBN 978-1-915202-44-4

At the start of Faraday's emotional debut, a dark sci-fi thriller, black sheep Brad Van Reed reluctantly returns to his small Pennsylvania hometown of Gracious, having fled on his putative wedding day years before. Drawing him back is his younger sister Kristen, keeper of a strange family heirloom that grants her increasingly worrisome visions of future events. Though he hoped for a quick visit, Brad soon becomes involved with the weird folks of Gracious, both local (like Joseph LeFevre, who secretly watches over Kristen) and imported (creepy rich dude Sindle Vunn and his crew of toughs). Plus, a flying specter known as the Nowhere Man has the town spooked, and seems to be closing in on Kristen. Faraday does a good job burying clues to his mystery in the psyches of his characters as well as in the bizarre geometry of an extraterrestrial-fireball-delivered mechanism that may be causing all the weirdness. Readers will especially enjoy Kristen's Wednesday Addams vibe. Faraday shows promise. *Agent: Mark Gottlieb, Trident Media Group. (Apr.)*

Book of Death and Madness

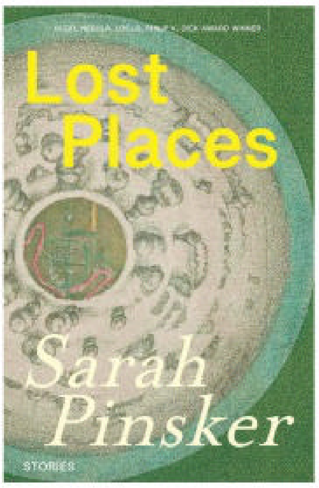
John Haas. WordFire, $38.99 (306p) ISBN 978-1-68057-402-9

Haas's follow-up to *Cults of Death and Madness* continues the harrowing adventures of Doctor Archibald Shaw and his death-defying efforts to prevent the eruption of Lovecraftian horrors on the earthly plane. It's 1885 and Shaw and his loyal young ward, Singh, have returned to London from India, having sent ahead a statue of the monster Cthulhu that holds all who possess it in its malignant thrall. That idol is the means by which the two hope to track down the cult leader

Ananya, who has fled to England ahead of them in possession of the dreaded Necronomicon, a book of spells that she hopes to use to open the door to “ancient, evil gods.” Haas does a superb job of evoking the dark side of Victorian England, referencing the crimes of the legendary Hellfire Club, the Whitechapel murders attributed to Jack the Ripper, and other notorious historical events. Though the over-the-top finale parochializes Lovecraft’s cosmic horrors somewhat, the novel still satisfies as a well-wrought supernatural thriller. Fans of paranormal period pieces will be pleased. *(Apr.)*

★ Lost Places

Sarah Pinsker. Small Beer, $18 trade paper (288p) ISBN 978-1-61873-199-9



This remarkable collection of 12 speculative shorts from Pinsker (*Sooner or Later Everything Falls into the Sea*) places celebrated favorites and hidden gems side by side. The volume is nearly bookended by two of the author’s best known and most lauded works: the deliciously unsettling opener “Two Truths and a Lie” and the formally playful penultimate tale “Where Oaken Hearts Do Gather,” both of which won both Hugo and Nebula awards. Perhaps even more exciting, however, are the pieces that received less fanfare upon original publication, like “I Frequently Hear Music in the Very Heart of Noise,” a lyrical collage that gathers musicians and writers from different eras in New York City and brings them together for a single ecstatic night, and “Remember This for Me,” a poignant tale of an artist whose muse is faithful even if her memory isn’t. The collection closes with a thrilling original novelette “Science Facts!” about a backpacking trip that grows increasingly disquieting. The result is sure to beguile speculative fiction fans—and anyone who appreciates a well-crafted story. *Agent: Kim-Mei Kirtland, Howard Morhaim Literary. (Mar.)*

Arca

G.R. Macallister. Saga, $29.99 (544p) ISBN 978-1-982167-92-9

The Drought of Girls has ended but all is not well in Macallister’s enthralling second Five Queendoms epic fantasy (after *Scorpica*). The usually harmonious matriarchal societies are in disarray and heading toward war. Young Queen Eminel of magical Arca navigates her new position in the wake of the events of the Rites of the Bloody-Handed and the deaths of both Mirri, the previous queen of Arca, and Sessadon, Mirri’s killer. In trade-hub queendom Paxim, Queen Heliane works to gain support for her son, Paulus, becoming the land’s first king. And, after growing up in scholarly Bastion, safely away from warlike Scorpica, Ama (the daughter of Scorpica’s late queen) finds a place as Paulus’s bodyguard, his life in her hands. Meanwhile, Queen Tamura leads the Scorpicae as they instigate attacks on Arca. Macallister keeps the tension high, brilliantly weaving together political intrigue and adventure. The refreshing worldbuilding and intricate character work remain highlights. This takes the series to new heights. *Agent: Holly Root, Root Literary. (Mar.)*

★ The Lies of the Ajungo

Moses Ose Utomi. Tordotcom, $19.99 (96p) ISBN 978-1-250-84906-9

Utomi perfectly blends fantasy and fable in his mesmerizing debut novella. In the vast Forever Desert lies the City of Lies, a town with no water. To survive, the city struck a deal with the fierce Ajungo Empire, trading the severed tongues of all citizens aged 13 and older for water. Tutu is days away from his 13th birthday when his mother falls gravely ill from dehydration. Desperate to save her, Tutu asks the city’s leader, Oba Ijefi, permission to go search the desert for water. Along the way, he befriends fellow travelers from other cities where lives have also been destroyed by the Ajungo demanding various body parts. All decide to band together to seek out the Ajungo and put a stop to their endless cycles of greed—a quest that leads them to a deadly secret that will change the lives of Tutu and his people forever. Utomi does a fantastic job pacing Tutu’s coming-of-age as his experiences in the desert challenge his ingrained beliefs. The simple yet effective plot draws readers into a harsh and beautiful world where nothing is as it seems. Fantasy fans will want to keep an eye on this up-and-coming author. *(Mar.)*

The Moon and the Desert

Robert E. Hampson. Baen, $18 trade paper (400p) ISBN 978-1-982192-49-5

Neuroscientist Hampson (*The Human Side*) excels at making difficult technical material approachable to layreaders, but flounders a bit with plotting in this uneven space romp inspired by Martin Calder’s 1972 novel *Cyborg* and the television series *The Six Million Dollar Man*. Glenn “Shep” Shepherd is the monitoring medical officer on Moonbase in 2039 when he rescues a trapped colleague from a fire on a lunar rover and is himself so severely injured that he requires an “extensive rebuild” with mostly experimental prosthetics. Shep’s demanding rehabilitation is spurred by his burning desire to go to Mars, but his hoped-for position is stolen by his former lover and now rival, Yvette Barbier. On her return from Mars, Barbier and her crew fall mysteriously ill, and Shep overcomes political and bureaucratic problems to wangle a dangerous rescue mission. Science-minded readers will relish the passages of extrapolated medical and psychological procedures, but the character interactions, particularly their often Grade B dialogue and stilted romantic maneuvers, suffer by comparison. This is hard science fiction with a vengeance. *(Mar.)*

Romance/Erotica

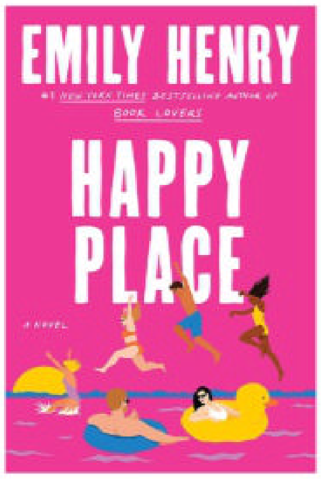
The Do-Over

Suzanne Park. Avon, $16.99 trade paper (384p) ISBN 978-0-06-321605-1

A woman gets a second chance at her college years in this charming rom-com from Park (*The Christmas Clash*). Acclaimed author Lily Lee has everything going for her: a series of smash-hit career empowerment books for women and a promising new executive role at her dream company. But when the company runs a background check, it discovers—to Lily’s surprise and horror—that she never officially graduated from college due to a clerical error. Lily has no choice but to leave New York

★ Happy Place

Emily Henry. Berkley, $27 (400p) ISBN 978-0-593-44127-5


EMILY HENRY
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF BOOK LOVERS
HAPPY PLACE
A NOVEL

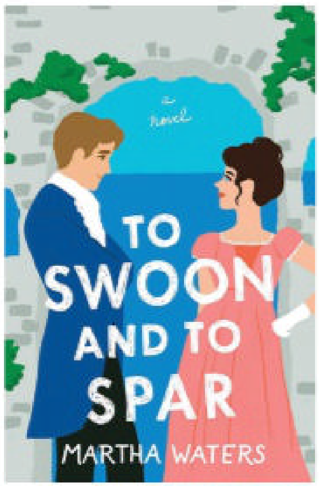
Exes must pretend they're still together in this delightful Summery rom-com from bestseller Henry (*Book Lovers*). Burned out surgical resident Harriet Kilpatrick is eager for a relaxing weeklong getaway with her tight-knit friend group at the remote Maine beach cottage they've frequented. Then she arrives and discovers that Wyn Connor will also be there for the week. Wyn and Harriet were the perfect couple in college, and then the perfect fiancés, but they broke up six months ago and have yet to tell their friends. With the cottage up for sale, Harriet is determined not to ruin the gang's last summer getaway, meaning she and Wyn must pretend to be happily in love. It's awkward at first—compounded by the fact that, of course, there's only one bed for the two of them—but soon they fall back into a familiar dynamic and old flames reignite. The chemistry between Wyn and Harriet is addictive, and both display some refreshing vulnerability. The lovable friend group, unusual but welcome in a Henry novel, help push the narrative forward and provide plenty of wit. This has the makings of a rom-com classic. *Agent: Taylor Haggerty, Root Literary. (Apr.)*

City and discreetly return to Carlthorpe College to finish her degree without her publisher or her fans finding out. Matters grow even more complicated when she realizes that her new TA is her college ex, PhD candidate Jake Cho, who instantly recognizes Lily and seizes his "twice-in-a-lifetime chance" to make things right between them and win her back. As Lily navigates collegiate coming-of-age—again—she's presented with a unique opportunity to explore what could have been if her life had taken a different route. Park's pitch-perfect comedic timing and knack for creating heartstrings-tugging moments make this thoughtful romance really shine. This is a winner. *Agent: Brent Taylor, Triada U.S. (Apr.)*

To Swoon and to Spar

Martha Waters. Atria, $17.99 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-66800-790-7

An elaborate hoax leads to unexpected love in Waters's satisfying, slow-burning fourth Regency Vows romance (after *To Marry and to Meddle*). Jane Spencer has been enjoying her freedom in Cornwall's Trethwick Abbey since the death of her parents and has no intention of allowing a marriage of convenience to Peter Bourne, seventh Viscount Penvale, to cramp her style. She intends to force him to abandon her in the country by convincing him the house is haunted with the help of her faithful staff. Unfortunately, Peter doesn't believe in ghosts and only agreed to the marriage to regain possession of Trethwick Abbey, his childhood home, so he's not easily driven out. The constant disturbances are irritating however, so he plays along when Jane not so innocently suggests the trouble could be a haunting, hoping to catch the mastermind behind the scheme. As he and Jane wander the halls in search of the undead, they discover to their surprise that they actually enjoy being around each other. Love blossoms, but even after their relationship transitions into a true marriage, their shaky foundation threatens their romance. The pace is somewhat uneven, but the goofy faux ghosts and Jane's hilariously blunt personality set this apart. Series fans won't be disappointed. *Agent: Taylor Haggerty, Root Literary. (Apr.)*



The World Is Full of Champions

J.H. Sullivan. Post Hill, $19 trade paper (288p) ISBN 978-1-63758-858-1

This rousing but unfocused romance from Sullivan (*Against the Tide*) follows two Black families across 30 years as they navigate racial and social tensions. In 1960s Philadelphia, Georgia Smythe's mother works as a maid for the affluent Whitman family, and Georgia develops a crush on the youngest Whitman son, Lawrence, that persists as the Smythe family weathers tough financial times after Georgia's father's death. Lawrence's troubled relationship with his own father causes him to harbor negative feelings toward his brother, Robert, whom his family favors. After a violent altercation incited by Lawrence leads to Robert's death, The Whitmans expect Lawrence to take the helm in Robert's absence and marry Claire Scott, the daughter of another well-to-do Black family, to maintain their social standing. When their relationship hits the rocks, however, Lawrence turns to Georgia for comfort and the pair begin a fling that leaves Lawrence torn between fulfilling his family's wishes and following his heart. The author puts a lot of care into depicting the racial tensions of the times, but the plot is muddled by multiple POVs and the romance comes together too late. Readers will struggle to remain invested. *(Apr.)*

The Quarantine Princess Diaries

Meg Cabot. Avon, $8.99 mass market (336p) ISBN 978-0-06-329193-5

Bestseller Cabot's charming 12th foray into the world of the Princess Diaries (after *Royal Wedding*) injects levity and light into life in lockdown. The conceit is this: at the height of the Covid pandemic, Princess Mia Thermapolis of Genovia shared select portions of her diary with Cabot, her royal biographer, first published on Cabot's blog and now expanded into this full-length volume, detailing how Mia's crazy family coped during quarantine. Though being stuck in the Genovian royal palace isn't the worst fate—and Mia does love getting to do diplomacy in sweats over Zoom calls—Mia feels overwhelmed running the principality when all she really wants is some alone time with her husband, Michael, who's been forced to self-isolate after exposure to the virus. Meanwhile, her grandmother recklessly declines to stay at home and her relatives still scheme to steal her throne. There's an unabashed silliness to the proceedings, with Princess Mia's oversized imagination and anxiety driving most of the drama. Cabot successfully finds joy in a difficult time. *Agent: Laura Langlie, Laura Langlie Agency. (Mar.)*

Infamous

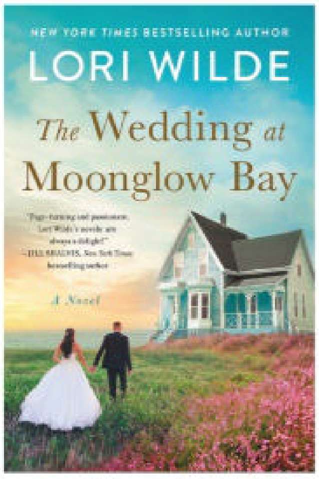
Lex Croucher. Griffin, $16.99 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-250-87565-5

Croucher (*Reputation*) infuses this energetic Regency era friends-to-lovers sapphic romance with zany wit, joie de vivre, and a distinctive literary bent. Edith "Eddie" Miller is distressed when Rose Li, her best friend, kissing practice partner, and primary audience for the stories she writes, backs out of their childhood pact never to marry and begins seeking the company of an older gentleman. Through Rose's new connections Eddie meets charismatic poet Nash Nicholson, who shows an interest in Eddie's writing. Eddie, Rose, and Rose's beau, Albert, join an eccentric circle of artists at Nash's rundown country estate for a retreat meant to inspire creativity. Amid the ensuing drinking, seances, and chaos, the women get the chance to be more explicit about their true feelings for each other—even as Nash's behavior toward Eddie becomes increasingly dubious. The physical connection between Eddie and Rose is sweet and gentle, if not electric, and the fact that Eddie's reaction to Nash's passionate aggression is disillusionment rather than swooning gives the story a refreshingly contemporary feel despite the period setting. Bookish readers who wish that Alcott's *Little Women* were a bit more explicitly queer will lap this up. *(Mar.)*

The Wedding at Moonglow Bay

Lori Wilde. Avon, $17.99 trade paper (384p) ISBN 978-0-06-313590-1

Wilde's overwrought fourth Moonglow Bay romance (after *The Lighthouse on Moonglow Bay*) focuses on a painful love triangle between two brothers and Samantha Riley. Coast Guardsman Nick Ginelli met orphan Samantha in high school and swept her off her feet with stories of the "Lightning Strike," a Ginelli family belief about love at first sight. Tragedy came for the fiery couple, however: after marrying young, Nick was lost at sea. Heartbroken, Samantha devoted herself to the Ginelli family restaurant, earning a degree, and raising her daughter. Then Nick's older brother Luca returned to town, sparking a new love. With Nick officially pronounced dead, Samantha and Luca marry—only for a very much alive Nick to walk into the bedroom right as they're about to consummate their marriage. Coverage of Nick's return goes viral, adding to the pressure on Samantha to determine which brother will make her happiest. While Wilde is clearly aiming for tenderness and poignancy, the ludicrous contrivances that keep the plot moving make this land closer to melodrama, and Samantha's romantic angst seems endless. Readers will likely lose patience well before Samantha finds her soulmate. *Agent: Jenny Bent, Bent Agency. (Mar.)*


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
LORI WILDE
The Wedding at Moonglow Bay
A Novel

A Calder at Heart

Janet Dailey. Kensington, $27 (272p) ISBN 978-1-4967-2746-6

In Dailey's intense third Calder Brand romance (after *Calder Grit*), love ignites between a WWI veteran and a frontier town doctor. U.S. Army major Logan Hunter accepts distant cousin Webb Calder's offer to start anew in 1919 Blue Moon, Mont., after the death of Logan's family from the Spanish flu. There, Logan meets Dr. Kristin Dollarhide, who saw her own share of horrific battle injuries while aiding U.S. troops in France. The pair are drawn to each other, but their families are caught in an ongoing land feud. Logan's determined to avoid the escalating feuding and embrace peace, angering Webb, who also has his eye on Kristin and relentlessly pursues her. Things grow even more complicated when Kristin's half brother, Mason, returns to town, roping the locals into a liquor smuggling operation. Tensions run high as Webb learns of Logan's interest in Kristin and Mason's dangerous scheme heats up, leading to the possibility of bloodshed. Dailey keeps the pace brisk with dangers both natural and man-made, and her battle-scarred protagonists are easy to root for. Series fans will be well pleased. *(Mar.)*

Comics

The Heavy Bright

Cathy Malkasian. Fantagraphics, $39.99 (340p) ISBN 978-1-68396-692-0

Malkasian (*Percy Gloom*) hurls readers into a feminist fantasy fictional universe that's alternately baffling and all too familiar. In a patriarchal dystopia where the warmongering Commanders rule with iron fists and women are treated as chattel, Arna, the daughter of a traveling puppeteer, commits the double sin of being female and a queer practitioner of "gender deception." An envoy from the spirit plane enlists Arna to rid the world of egglike objects that spark aggression. As her quest progresses, humanity becomes less warlike, but not less cruel. "Our life is crazy... but we're the sanest people alive," comments Arna's girlfriend, Sela. Malkasian renders a world that feels lived-in, building every detail from the ground up: architecture, customs, religion, music. The fluid, confident art has a funhouse-mirror hyperreality, reminiscent of alternative cartoonists like Renee French and Dave Cooper, that adds a satirical sting. If the sociopolitical commentary is sometimes heavy-handed, the endlessly imaginative worldbuilding is more than enough to keep the pages turning. This smart, surrealist work has the appeal of *Handmaid's Tale* crossed with Tim Burton. *(Mar.)*

★ Going Remote: A Teacher's Journey

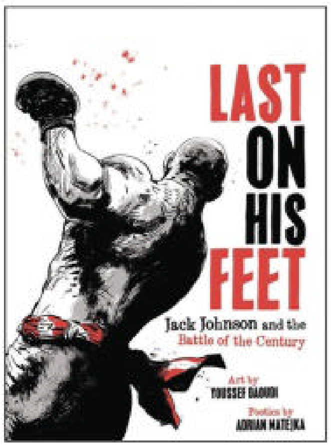
Adam Bessie and Peter Glanting. Seven Stories, $18.95 trade paper (160p) ISBN 978-1-644-21270-7

Bessie's debut graphic memoir of teaching at a community college during the pandemic while undergoing treatment for cancer swells with a determined optimism despite being threaded with dystopian references. Bessie believes in the community college system as a hub of diversity crucial to class mobility. In January 2020, he steps onto his San Francisco Bay Area campus after an eight-month sabbatical; he's been working on a memoir about his decade-long game of cat and mouse with a brain tumor. He embraces the institution's smells of "strawberry vape," buzzy with student's collective energy. But by March, "We are subjects in 'The Great Zoom-School Experiment.' " He plays amateur IT guy and social worker, and teaches to "little black boxes" with muted mics. His students, many of them already marginalized, drop out or face a litany of crises. Bessie's suspicious of techie solutions—"Free-market technocrats see this as an opportunity to accelerate their agenda to monetize public education"—and draws parallels to the science fiction literature on his syllabus. Glanting's drawings are thick with shadow and cyborgian representations of a world isolated by multiple diseases. But as a teacher, Bessie's idealism holds through, and he ends on an open-ended note—the pandemic still unfurling, his tumor held at bay by an experimental medication. As he writes: "Right now, we're here," and that is fragile and poignant enough. *(Feb.)*

★ Last on His Feet: Jack Johnson and the Battle of the Century

Youssef Daoudi and Adrian Matejka. Liveright, $29.99 (336p) ISBN 978-1-63149-558-8

A desert boxing match becomes an epic, a tragic symbol, and a thunderous encapsulation of America's bloody racial history in this passionately told graphic history from Daoudi (*Monk!*) and Matejka (*The Big Smoke*) about America's first Black heavyweight champion, Jack Johnson (1878–1946). The book is framed around Johnson's 1910 Reno, Nev., prizefight against Jim "The Great White Hope" Jeffries. Between rounds, the narrative leaps backward and forward in time. A man who loved the high life and flashed enough gold teeth "to buy an automobile," Johnson attracted



[Q&A]

PW Talks with Adam Bessie

Teaching from the Cloud

Bessie documents his experience teaching community college during the pandemic while going through treatment for brain cancer in *Going Remote* (Seven Stories, Mar.; reviewed on p. 60), a graphic memoir drawn by Peter Glanting.

How did this project take shape?

I immediately started writing about the first days of the pandemic because I knew it would be a complete shift in our reality. I drew a couple of cartoony images and emailed Peter Glanting—he's great at drawing science fiction imagery. I wanted a Zoom window flying into outer space.

How did your relationship to teaching change over the course of the pandemic?

You can create some kind of community online, but it feels profoundly different. In a physical classroom, I felt like I was performing jazz with the students. When asynchronous, I felt this profound sense of alienation. Now my experience is much more hybridized. I feel pulled between the cloud and the ground.

©MICHAEL LEVITIN

Our caseloads have gone up dramatically. We're not just teaching content and skills. Sometimes it was trying to find someone housing. I'd hear horrible things people were coming through. It helped me to see the depth and complexity of challenges that students are bringing into the space. At the same time, class sizes have not gone down. Who is going to reinvent and reenvision? Corporations that are looking at efficiency and data collection and surveillance capitalism, or people on the front lines—or the students themselves?

By necessity the book ends on this note of uncertainty. How do you navigate uncertainty as a writer and as a person?

One thing I've learned from the process of being a cancer patient is that one of your main jobs is staying present with what's happening. Every three months, I have to get a brain scan. Catastrophizing and coming up with horrible science fiction scenarios about what's going to occur to me is wasted time. It takes work to be present. Writing in comics, especially, is one of the main tools to keep myself present.

This is a story about trying to separate our souls from our bodies in order to save our bodies, and the impact of that effort. Is a brain tumor a perfect horrible metaphor?

Living with a brain tumor, it certainly it feels like a divided self. I talk about Sontag's idea of the Kingdom of the Ill. When one is really sick, whether you're undergoing chemotherapy or going through the MRI process, you really feel separate from the overground world of the healthy. This book is about making all of that visible, because when you're in the containment unit, in this quarantine, you're cut off from community, and that is the deepest illness. During quarantine, we all felt what it was like to be a cancer patient, where you're stuck and things are out of your control. The thing that is healing is community and visibility.

—Cheryl Klein

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racist bile not just for beating white men in the ring but also for marrying white women. The fury directed his way scorches the page in Daoudi's harshly etched lines. In Johnson's post-fighting years, he was harried into exile and beat his wife Etta Duryea before her 1912 suicide. Through highs and lows, he's portrayed in all his complexity, with emphasis on his braggadocio ("I am so strong I could plant my feet and keep Father Time from moving forward") and his canny knack as a performer ("Understand Shakespeare. Man's behavior is in the great poet's words"). This is a big brawl of a book that, like the greatest boxing matches, finds the poetry in the violence. *Agent: Holly McGhee, Pippin Properties. (Feb.)*

Valentine's Trust (Murder Inc. # 1)

Brian Michael Bendis and Michael Avon Oeming. Dark Horse, $19.99 trade paper (248p) ISBN 978-1-5067-3027-1

In this lightning-paced but dramatically muddled alternate history from Eisner winners Bendis and Oeming (the Powers series), the scion of a New York Mafia family is framed for the murder of a senator just days after becoming a made man. A paper-thin stereotype, Valentine Gallo goes on the run with pistol-packing va-va-voom redhead Jagger Rose in an attempt to clear their names. This becomes increasingly unlikely as an array of rival mafiosi and federal agents come gunning for them. In this curious world, the U.S. government has ceded control of whole parts of the country to organized crime as part of a tentative truce that's now coming undone. Betrayal, chest-puffing showdowns, and clenched-jaw dialogue abound. The backstory slots familiar JFK conspiracy plot blocks into a hard-to-swallow fantasy. Oeming's throwback pop expressionist style, with canted angles, blocks of shadow, and splashy color, recalls *Batman: The Animated Series*. Though having as tenuous a connection to crime world reality as the John Wick movies, and about as high a body count, this new series will likely appeal to similar fans. Additional volumes are likely to be snapped up by fans of high-octane and low-logic action. *(Jan.)*

Nonfiction

Biting the Hand: Growing Up Asian in Black and White America

Julia Lee. Holt, $26.99 (256p) ISBN 978-1-25082-467-7

English professor Lee (*Our Gang: A Racial History of 'The Little Rascals'*) dispels the myth of the docile Asian and calls out the absurdities of racial hierarchies in this incisive memoir. Asserting that America's Black-and-white racial binary renders other cultures invisible, Lee interrogates her Korean American culture and upbringing, the stereotypes foisted upon Asian Americans, and ways to dismantle a destructively entrenched white supremacist ideology. Whiteness, she writes, casts "Asians as perpetual foreigners and the model minority" and "Black people as perpetual criminals and the problem minority." Meanwhile, beneath the composure of her Korean Americans mother, simmered shame and rage in the form of *hwa-byung* ("anger/fire disease," which Lee calls "the curse of being Korean and a woman") and enforced by *chae-myun* (a "code of behavior" she describes as "a kind of social armor"). Lee assiduously identifies what constitutes white and Asian America, but her analysis somewhat falters outside of these two spaces; aside from explanations of the 1992 Los Angeles uprising—ignited by the beating of Rodney King by white LAPD cops—and an introduction to the concept of "skinfolk vs. kinfolk," for instance, Black America is much less defined. Still, Lee's self-reflective voice and sharp assessment of societal failures yield a revealing and righteously infuriating work. *(Apr.)*

Magnificent Rebel: Nancy Cunard in Jazz Age Paris

Anne de Courcy. St. Martin's, $29.99 (336p) ISBN 978-1-250-27256-0

Nancy Cunard (1896–1965), the glamorous and unconventional great-granddaughter of the founder of the Cunard shipping line, takes center stage in this luminous biography from de Courcy (*Chanel's Riviera*). A legendary beauty regularly photographed by Man Ray, Cunard rejected the cultural mores of the British aristocracy and refused common definitions of fidelity in favor of a "buccaneering attitude to sex." After moving to Paris in 1920 and falling under the influence of modernism and surrealism, Cunard had love affairs with authors Ezra Pound, Aldous Huxley, Michael Arlen, and Louis Aragon, and jazz pianist Henry Crowder. Founder of the Hours Press, Cunard was a muse as well as a publisher, and made Black culture the "central cause of her life." She spent three years assembling *Negro*, a 1933 anthology of works "by and about black people" and raised funds to support the Scottsboro Boys, who were wrongly accused of rape in the U.S. Her attraction to African culture could also be seen—and heard—in her signature accessory, ivory bracelets that ringed both arms from wrist to bicep. Physical and mental health woes exacerbated by "a lifetime of alcohol, smoking, and barely eating" made Cunard's last days "appallingly sad," but de Courcy does justice to her subject's glory years. It's a seductive portrait of life lived to the fullest. *(Apr.)*

©STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

Chinese army troops trail the hijackers of the Peking Express in 1923 Shandong, as seen in James M. Zimmerman's The Peking Express *(reviewed on p. 64).*

You Could Make This Place Beautiful: A Memoir

Maggie Smith. One Signal, $28.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-98218-585-5

Poet Smith (*Goldenrod*) eschews the traditional memoir format in this mixed take on her recent divorce and its aftermath. "I've wondered if I can even call this book a memoir," she writes. "It's not something that happened in the past that I'm recalling for you.... I'm still living through this story as I write it." In winkingly titled chapters ("Email, Subject Line: Update," "A Half Hour to Cry"), Smith details the collapse of her marriage with a bard's eye for detail: a postcard with another woman's name in her husband's messenger bag, "open, its unbuckled flap hanging over the back of the chair"; the discovery of half the family's savings withdrawn after an argument; and co-parenting, through separation and a pandemic, before her husband moved 500 miles away. Smith often breaks the fourth wall to explain her writing process, which reads as a mix of self-effacing, self-knowing, and, occasionally, self-satisfied, especially when accompanied by aphoristic asides. ("A memoir is about 'the art of memory,' and part of the art is in the curation," she writes in an imagined response to an imagined reader's query. "Next question.") This lyrical personal reflection is undoubtedly affecting, but as often it feels affected. *Agent: Joy Tutela, David Black Literary. (Apr.)*

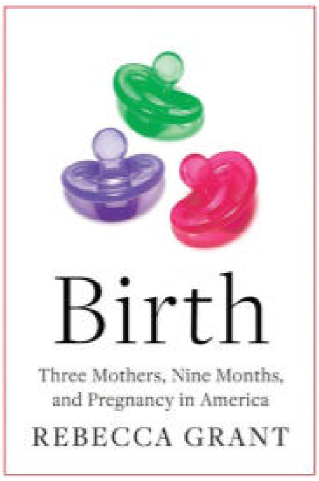
Charleston: Race, Water, and the Coming Storm

Susan Crawford. Pegasus, $28.95 (384p) ISBN 978-1-63936-357-5

New Orleans is not the only beautiful and historic Southern city loved by tourists, but plagued by racial tensions and at risk from rising waters, according to this impassioned cri de coeur. While Charleston, S.C., has not experienced as devastating an environmental disaster as Hurricane Katrina, Harvard Law School professor Crawford (*Captive Audience*) contends that Charleston's recent expansion across marshes and sea islands renders it exceptionally vulnerable to climate change. The danger is not evenly distributed among the city's inhabitants, however; the poorest Charlestonians, many of whom are African American, occupy parts of the city most at risk of destruction. But that outcome is not inevitable, according to Crawford, who profiles local activists including minister Joseph Darby; entrepreneur David White, whose nonprofit provides laundry services to people without homes on the city's flood-prone East Side; and community development advocate Michelle Mapp, who works to "help prevent eviction and displacement of low-income and Black households." Crawford persuasively links the precarious position of the city's Black neighborhoods to other "legacies of slavery and racism," including segregated schools and a lack of affordable housing for low- and middle-income families. By turns heartbreaking and hopeful, this is an eye-opening look behind Charleston's genteel facade. *(Apr.)*

★ Birth: Three Mothers, Nine Months, and Pregnancy in America

Rebecca Grant. Avid Reader, $28.99 (400p) ISBN 978-1-982170-42-4



Journalist Grant's auspicious debut documents the pregnancy, birth, and initial postpartum experiences of three first-time mothers associated with Portland, Ore.'s Andaluz Waterbirth Center. The story of Jillian, a midwifery student turned birth center office manager, gives Grant the chance to chronicle the history of midwifery and portray a classic birth center experience ("The small building seemed to possess its own sense of time, as if it was a self-contained island floating separately from the rest of the world"), while sections profiling T'Nika, a Black nurse with aspirations of working in labor and delivery, include discussions of racial disparities in healthcare and what happens when circumstances require birth plans to be changed. The difficult pregnancy journey of Alison and her husband Steve touches on infertility, miscarriage, and the anxiety that medicalized birth experiences can produce. Throughout, Grant maintains a sense of intimacy while contextualizing each woman's experiences with analysis of medical, legal, and cultural matters. Though most U.S. births happen in hospitals with obstetricians rather than midwives, Grant's focus on one corner of maternity care allows her to show that even best-case scenarios have practical and emotional complexities. It's an enlightening and accessible portrait of maternal healthcare in America. *(Apr.)*

The Peking Express: The Bandits Who Stole a Train, Stunned the West, and Broke the Republic of China

James M. Zimmerman. PublicAffairs, $30 (352p) ISBN 978-1-5417-0170-0

This gripping debut history from Beijing-based lawyer Zimmerman recounts the 1923 raid on a luxury train by Chinese bandits and the ensuing 37-day hostage standoff. Seeking to "fight back against the warlords and business interests that extracted local resources" from Shantung province, ex-soldier Sun Mei-yao and his bandit troops derailed the train just south of the town of Lincheng. But Sun Mei-yao's plan to use the train's foreign and Chinese passengers as a bargaining chip went less smoothly. The attackers struggled to march their 100 captives, some of them barefoot and wearing nightgowns, to a mountaintop stronghold. While Chinese passengers who couldn't keep up were killed, the 28 foreign hostages were treated better. American journalist John Powell, who "advocated for a strong and independent China," became a leader of the captives and helped open negotiations between the bandits and government troops. Lucy Aldrich, the sister-in-law of John D. Rockefeller Jr., taught the attackers English, while her wily maid, Mathilde Schoneberg, hid Aldrich's family jewels in her underwear. Zimmerman weaves in snapshots of a country in turmoil, contrasting walled cities and starving villagers caught in the cross fire between bandits and warlords with thriving metropolises built by foreign interests. Dramatic and meticulously researched, it's an immersive look at a forgotten chapter of Chinese history. Photos. *(Apr.)*

A Living Remedy: A Memoir

Nicole Chung. Ecco, $28.99 (288p) ISBN 978-0-06303-161-6

Chung (*All You Can Ever Know*) couches the evolution of the bond between parent and child in the struggles of class and loss in this melancholy memoir. Born "severely premature" in Seattle to Korean immigrants who "did not believe they could afford to raise a medically complex child," Chung was adopted by a white couple from rural Oregon who had "little guidance from the child welfare system and no model for how to raise a Korean child." Her adoptive parents lived paycheck to paycheck, which they tried to hide from Chung, who likewise hid the trauma of "racial isolation as an adoptee" growing up where others "let me know that I was not wanted." She later attended college on a scholarship, married, had children, and moved to D.C. for grad school. Loaded down with student debt, Chung was unable to help her parents as their health failed: her uninsured father couldn't afford treatment for his diabetes, and her mother died of ovarian cancer, which had Chung "falling, tumbling through empty air, with nowhere to land," during the pandemic, necessitating her to attend the funeral virtually. Powerfully rendered scenes illuminate this quiet polemic against a dysfunctional healthcare system, hidden poverty, and racism, though the narrative stumbles toward the end as Chung meanders through scattered reflections. There's great emotional power here, if an imperfect execution. *Agent: Maria Massie, Massie & McQuilkin Literary. (Apr.)*

The Point of No Return: American Democracy at the Crossroads

Thomas Byren Edsall. Princeton Univ., $32 (448p) ISBN 978-0-691-16489-2

In this data-driven essay collection, *New York Times* columnist Edsall (*The Age of Austerity*) sheds light on shifting voter demographics before, during, and after Donald Trump's presidency. Contending that partisan realignment sparked by the civil rights movement (working-class whites without college degrees became increasingly Republican, leaving the Democratic agenda to be set by the "knowledge class") paved the way to Donald Trump's presidency, Edsall presents data showing an increasing correlation since the 1960s between voters' attitudes toward race, gender, and sexuality and their party affiliation. Analyzing Trump's march toward securing the Republican nomination in 2016, Edsall claims that rural and working-class voters were motivated by the same forces they had been in 2010 and 2014—anger at the "undeserving rich" and the "undeserving poor." In a 2018 column, Edsall writes that Trump "appears to be gambling that letting those voters' lives continue to languish will work to his advantage in 2020." Skillfully parsing polls, Census Bureau statistics, and other data sources, Edsall provides essential context for understanding blue counties that went red in 2016, how an influx of wealthy voters has remade the Democratic Party, and why Trump made gains among Latino voters in 2020. Wonky yet accessible, this is a valuable guide to America's political landscape. *(Apr.)*

German Blood, Slavic Soil: How Nazi Königsberg Became Soviet Kaliningrad

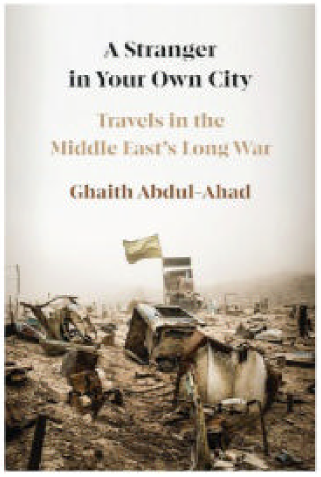
Nicole Eaton. Cornell Univ., $35.95 (330p)
ISBN 978-1-5017-6736-4

Boston College history professor Eaton debuts with a detailed study of "the only city to have been ruled by both Hitler and Stalin as their own domain." Founded by Teutonic knights in the 13th century, Königsberg was part of East Prussia until 1946, when the Soviet Union took over and renamed the city Kaliningrad. Eaton describes how a "peculiarly local variant of Nazism" developed in East Prussia, which was isolated from the rest of Germany. "Precisely because East Prussia was trapped behind the Polish Corridor, because it had long lagged in industrial development, because its agriculture suffered and its population had stagnated from outmigration," local Nazi leaders argued that the region "would become the foremost site for the great Nazi experiment in full societal transformation." Instead, East Prussia took the brunt of the Red Army's offensive in the spring of 1945. Relying on eyewitness accounts, Eaton details atrocities committed by advancing Soviet soldiers and retreating Nazis. With Königsberg destroyed and millions of survivors facing starvation, Moscow mostly neglected East Prussia while local administrators sought to expel the province's German population and pursued a program of rapid collectivization. Comprehensive and fine-grained, this is a meticulous study of a city torn between two "radically transformative and violent revolutionary regimes." *(Apr.)*

★ A Stranger in Your Own City: Travels in the Middle East's Long War

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad. Knopf, $30 (432p)
ISBN 978-0-593-53688-9

Journalist Abdul-Ahad's kaleidoscopic and incisive debut recounts the 20 years since U.S.-led coalition forces took control of Baghdad. He begins with his childhood memories of Saddam Hussein ("the embodiment of our national narrative") pinning medals on the chests of his generals during the 1980s Iran-Iraq War and charts how sanctions imposed after the First Gulf War, combined with Hussein's corrupt patronage system, turned Iraq into "a nation of hustlers." In scenes of the chaotic 2003 takeover and its aftermath, Abdul-Ahad describes how Hussein's toppling unleashed sectarian wars between Iraq's Sunni and Shia factions, weakened democracy in the Middle East, and emboldened other dictators in the region. Explaining how Sunni insurgents captured Fallujah and other cities in 2014, Abdul-Ahad notes that in the "all-embracing corruption culture of the Iraqi state, the depravity and cronyism of the security services had reached surreal levels." Interleaving his own observations as a Baghdad native and former translator for Western journalists with those of other ordinary Iraqis, Abdul-Ahad details bloody sectarian battles, heart-pounding run-ins with ISIS henchmen, and a populace trying to reclaim its city and country from Iraq's greedy ruling class and those still "immersed in their selfish sectarian mentalities." It's a master class in reporting. Illus. *(Mar.)*



Travelers to Unimaginable Lands: Dementia and the Hidden Workings of the Mind

Dasha Kiper. Random House, $28 (240p)
ISBN 978-0-39959-053-5

In this thoughtful debut, Kiper, a clinical supervisor at an Alzheimer's caregiving organization, digs into the tortuous effects of dementia for sufferers and caregivers alike. When Kiper decided to spend a year as a live-in caregiver for a 98-year-old man with dementia, she'd expected his behavior to be mercurial. What she didn't count on were her reactions, including anger and sometimes buying in to his delusions. Drawing on neurological research and her experience counseling caregivers, Kiper zeros in on the dilemmas that arise when patient and caregiver "unknowingly collaborate in misinterpreting" dementia. Caregivers, for instance, often feel patients are capable of self-awareness even though they know otherwise. Elsewhere, Kiper explains that caregivers often don't detect dementia in loved ones even when it's "staring them in the face," as it conflicts with their "internal model of reality." This becomes especially tricky when the condition's emotional symptoms (anger, confusion) are mistaken for a normal part of a difficult relationship. The author's clear reasoning skillfully illuminates psychological concepts, and her poignant experiences bring them to life, sensitively broaching issues of free will, identity, and loss. Those dealing with dementia will find solace in this compassionate investigation of the human mind. *(Mar.)*

Tweakerworld

Jason Yamas. Unnamed Press, $28 (288p)
ISBN 978-1-95121-370-1

Documentarian Yamas, a "boring middleclass white boy from the suburbs," falls into a world of meth, the hedonistic "parTy n' play" queer subculture, and drug dealing in this turbulent memoir. Thirty years old in 2016, newly addicted, and convinced his drug-addled descent will be worthy of film, Yamas defends his lifestyle even as his personal and professional relationships dissolve. Abruptly dumped, he aborts rehab, gets kicked off a film project, and flees Hollywood for the Bay Area to move in with his brother. He invites an old collaborator to work on a project but ends up selling meth instead, eventually securing "a heavy hitting deal with the Mexican Cartel" and Betty, a major local drug distributor—"a squat old lady, her hair stale blonde and slicked back like a greaser." Even as he descends into a world of circling law enforcement and sleepless psychosis, he considers himself "a character... in this story about addiction and community and about the intersection of sex and drugs in gay culture. I mean, it's about so much more that I've yet to even discover!" Wisely, he chooses to avoid moralizing, focusing instead on his gripping "experiential journey." In the end, he makes it out, mind and body intact enough to produce this book. It's a testament to resolve and a remarkable view of a multifaceted, and at-times destructive, subculture. *Agent: Laura Usselman, Stuart Krichevsky Literary. (Mar.)*

Ilse Koch on Trial: The Contested History of the "Bitch of Buchenwald"

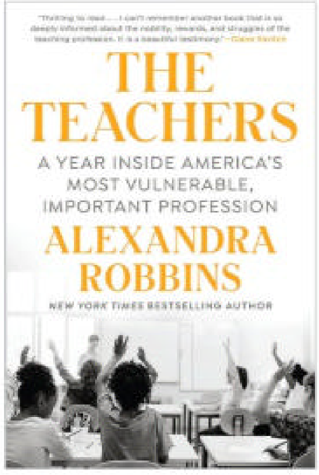
Tomaz Jardim. Harvard Univ., $35 (368p) ISBN 978-0-674-24918-9

In this disturbing investigation, historian Jardim (*The Mauthausen Trial*) recasts Nazi war criminal Ilse Koch as a scapegoat. The wife of Buchenwald commandant Karl Koch, Ilse was acquitted by a Nazi court of receiving stolen goods in 1944 and convicted by U.S. and West German authorities of war crimes in 1947 and 1951. After spending nearly 24 years in prison, she died by suicide in 1967. Scrupulously examining the trial records, Jardim argues that Ilse was "a relatively inconsequential woman" who became "one of the most enduring symbols of Nazi Terror" because of the public's "voyeuristic fascination with her alleged crimes" and "outrage at her perceived violation of accepted gender norms." According to Jardim, there is no evidence that Ilse committed the most "sensational and grotesque" crimes attributed to her, including that she "had ordered the murder of tattooed inmates in order to collect their skins for the production of lampshades." Ilse's West German trial "was more of a moral crusade than an attempt to reckon with the crimes of the concentration camp system," Jardim argues, and "provided a safe target for the postwar German public to comfortably condemn without having to reflect on the criminality and violence implicit in the National Socialism that most had either supported or enabled." Scrupulous and unsettling, this is a vital reconsideration of a notorious figure from history. Photos. *(Mar.)*

★ The Teachers: A Year Inside America's Most Valuable, Important Profession

Alexandra Robbins. Dutton, $29 (384p) ISBN 978-1-101-98675-2

Journalist and substitute teacher Robbins (*The Nurses*) offers a poignant, behind-the-scenes exploration of America's public schools focused on three teachers in different regions of the country. Miguel, a middle-school special education teacher in the West, advocates for his students against a hostile school board. Penny, a sixth-grade math teacher, navigates a toxic culture of teacher cliques in the South, while Rebecca, an East Coast elementary school educator, struggles to find time for a life outside of school. Robbins vividly chronicles their challenges, successes, and motivations, showing how Covid-19 "further exposed the nation's shameful treatment of teachers" when short-staffed school districts ordered underpaid educators to give up their lunch and planning periods to take on extra students and duties. Interspersed with the profiles are incisive essays—based on interviews with hundreds of other educators—on such topics as parental aggression, high stakes testing, inadequate support staff, and school violence. Robbins provides eye-opening statistics (94% of public school teachers spend their own money on supplies; 44% of new teachers leave the field within the first five years) and common-sense solutions (better pay, more staffing). This deeply researched and impressive study brings home the fact that America underinvests in the education of its children—and that teachers step in to fill the gaps. *Agent: Gail Ross, Ross Yoon Agency. (Mar.)*


THE TEACHERS
A YEAR INSIDE AMERICA'S MOST VULNERABLE, IMPORTANT PROFESSION
ALEXANDRA ROBBINS
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Pitching Democracy: Baseball and Politics in the Dominican Republic

April Yoder. Univ. of Texas, $45 (230p) ISBN 978-1-4773-2676-3

University of New Haven historian Yoder debuts with a fine-grained study of the role baseball played in the Dominican Republic's pursuit of democracy in the early 1960s. As Dominican players including Orlando Cepeda and Juan Marichal made a name for themselves on the global stage, they paved the way for future stars like Boston Red Sox Hall of Famer Pedro Martínez, and created "a canvas onto which Dominicans projected their democratic aspirations." Ironically, dictator Rafael Trujillo's efforts to use baseball to buttress his message of progress and authority sowed the seeds for the rise of democracy after his assassination in 1961. Yoder tracks the country's emergence as a baseball powerhouse to the Trujillo regime's fostering of ties to U.S. baseball and 1955 takeover of an annual professional tournament in the Dominican Republic, and convincingly explains how on-field successes encouraged ordinary Dominicans to imagine "democracy as a model for society that promoted equality of rights and economic opportunity." Yoder also sheds light on how the country's first democratically elected president, Juan Bosch, was undermined by "growing anticommunist sentiment." Enriched by Yoder's passion for the sport and extensive knowledge of Cold War Latin American politics, this is a detailed study of the links between sport and social change. *(Mar.)*

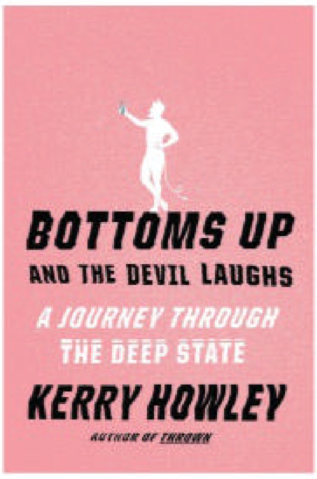
Queer Imaginings: On Writing and Cinematic Friendship

David A. Gerstner. Wayne State Univ., $42.99 trade paper (416p) ISBN 978-0-8143-5021-8

"Cinema is the queer work of art,"

★ Bottoms Up and the Devil Laughs: A Journey Through the Deep State

Kerry Howley. Knopf, $28 (256p) ISBN 978-0-525-65549-7



In this fascinating dispatch from the height of the surveillance age, Howley (*Thrown*) expands on her *New York* magazine profile of Reality Winner, the intelligence specialist who leaked classified reports on Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election. Born in Texas in 1991, Winner was a "comically mature adolescent... with a compulsive drive to improve herself." Skilled with foreign languages, she joined the Air Force after high school and learned Dari, Pashto, and Farsi; assigned to the drone program, she sat "in a cubicle in Maryland and eavesdropped on Pakistani men day after day." After her honorable discharge from the military, Winner was hired by an NSA contractor to translate intercepted communications related to Iran's aerospace program. Her security clearance gave her access to a top-secret report on Russian efforts to hack into U.S. election systems, which she leaked to the *Intercept* in 2017. Based on extensive interviews with Winner, her family, and her friends, and enriched by incisive character sketches of Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, and other whistleblowers, Howley reveals how the gravest threat to the national security state has become "ideological, morally serious twentysomethings finding themselves as they sifted through secrets their younger selves had promised to keep." Witty, humane, and fiercely intelligent, this is a striking critique of a world intent on "burying itself" in information. *(Mar.)*

contends Gerstner (*Christophe Honoré*), a professor of cinema studies at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island, in this eclectic if sometimes abstruse collection of previously published academic articles, movie reviews, and blog posts, as well as several new essays. The more accessible offerings analyze how literature gives rise to desire in director Christophe Honoré's *Sorry Angel* (2018) and how Peter Greenaway's use of montage in *Eisenstein in Guanajuato* (2015) challenges the "homophobia that has for so long circulated around [Sergei] Eisenstein," the Russian director who some claim was gay. In "Queer Angels..." Gerstner suggests that filmmaker Kenneth Anger's 1959 book *Hollywood Babylon*, a compilation of tabloid fodder about major players in the film world, represented a queer approach to history because its factually dubious gossip complicated mainstream accounts from which queer people had been excluded. However, these thought-provoking selections are accompanied by sometimes impenetrable, theory-heavy entries that are shrouded in academic jargon and awkward in style ("It is necessary to reengage the limits of Irigaray's concept of sexual difference in order to, first, identify the homosexual's relation to the Mother"). There's a stimulating exploration of queerness on the silver screen on offer here, but readers will have to wade through some opaque prose to find it. *(Mar.)*

The Great Regeneration: Ecological Agriculture, Open-Source Technology, and a Radical Vision of Hope

Dorn Cox, with Courtney White. Chelsea Green, $22.95 trade paper (240p) ISBN 978-1-64502-067-7

This rigorous debut from Cox, research director for the Wolfe's Neck Center for Agriculture and the Environment in Maine, touts the benefits of regenerative agriculture, which he calls "a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services." The concept anchors Cox's suggestions on how to develop a more ecologically responsible agricultural system based in collaboration and shared knowledge. Key to this program, the author contends, will be the development of open-source software that enables sharing peer-reviewed data on optimal growing conditions for crops. Cox advocates boosting cooperation in food production and delivery as well, and finds a success story in three New Hampshire farms that pooled resources to create an online store through which customers could receive products from all three farms in the same shipment. Many of the recommendations take inspiration from Indigenous practices, such as the "agroecology" food production system that plants multiple crops in one plot in an effort to "mimic nature." Though Cox's efforts to distinguish "regenerative agriculture" from other approaches to farming sometimes confuse (he criticizes "sustainability" and "soil health" rhetoric despite appearing to share its goals), his upbeat attitude complements the well-thought-out recommendations. The provocative proposals merit serious attention. *(Mar.)*

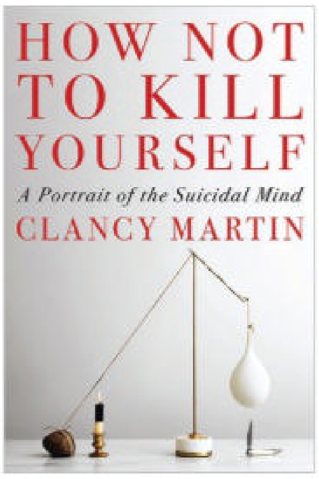
★ The Killing of Lord George: A Tale of Murder and Deceit in Edwardian England

Karl Shaw. Icon, $29.95 (304p) ISBN 978-1-78578-846-8

Was an innocent man falsely suspected of a 1911 murder? Journalist Shaw (*The First Showman*) convincingly maintains that 26-year-old Herbert Cooper did not kill "Lord" George Sanger, who, for more than 50 years, "was Britain's most popular and most successful entertainer." Through detailed analysis of records that were sealed for more than a century, Shaw brings the crime to life. Cooper had served as Sanger's personal attendant for years but had fallen out of favor with his employer for an unknown reason. On Nov. 28, 1911, the police were summoned to the Sanger residence in London's Finchley district, where Arthur Jackson, who had partially replaced Cooper, accused Cooper of killing Sanger with an axe. The coroner ruled that the 85-year-old Sanger died from being "battered to death with a hatchet." Cooper's guilt was

★ How Not to Kill Yourself

Clancy Martin. Pantheon, $30 (464p) ISBN 978-0-593-31705-1



Philosopher and novelist Martin (*How to Sell*) delivers a disturbing and transfixing dissection of suicide and its circumstances. Toggling between the personal and the analytical, Martin presents a patient, chilling consideration of "what it's like to want to kill yourself, sometimes on a daily basis, yet to go on living," as well as his "own particular good reasons for doing so." In three sections, Martin addresses societal conceptions of self-slaughter, his own struggles with alcohol and the times he hit rock bottom, and how to chart a path toward recovery. Along the way, he touches on famous suicides from Seneca to Anne Sexton, and historical and philosophical cases considering or even justifying the act, from philosophies as distinct as Bushido, pessimism, and stoicism. Funny but never flippant, Martin takes into account throughout the weight of his subject, even when describing his own grisly attempts, or those of his friends, without platitude or sentiment ("The last time I tried to kill myself," the book begins, "was in my basement with a dog leash"). This provocative dive into a difficult subject shouldn't be missed. *Agent: Susan Golomb, Writers House. (Mar.)*

universally accepted after he died by suicide. The evidence Shaw uncovered casts serious doubt on almost every aspect of the official verdict, including Sanger's cause of death. Shaw alternates sections about the murder inquiry with ones about Sanger's life, both creating sympathy for him and heightening tension. This brilliant reconstruction of a cause célèbre will fascinate true crime buffs. *(Mar.)*

Warren Buffett: Investor and Entrepreneur

Todd A. Finkle. Columbia Univ., $27.95 (296p) ISBN 978-0-231-20712-6

This ho-hum paean to Warren Buffett covers well-trod ground about the investor's life and career. Finkle (*Lessons Learned from Leading Entrepreneurs*), an entrepreneurship professor at Gonzaga University, begins with Buffett's upbringing as the son of a stockbroker and describes his first moneymaking ventures, including an enterprise that took in money from pinball machines Buffett placed in local stores while he was in high school. Progressing through Buffett's early career, the author discusses the investor's 1965 purchase of textile manufacturer Berkshire Hathaway, its transformation into a holding company in 1969, and the contributions of right-hand man Charlie Munger, who masterminded successful investments in Geico, Coca-Cola, and Gillette. Finkle outlines Buffett's investment philosophy, which includes valuing legacy companies over startups, holding on to investments "indefinitely," and collecting firsthand knowledge about companies before investing (Buffett invested in American Express in 1963 despite a recent plummet in its stock value because he noticed shoppers were still using the company's credit cards). The biographical background is well-researched, but Finkle's uncritical treatment frequently indulges in hagiography and brings little new to the table about the "Oracle of Omaha." The result is a serviceable if overly adulatory account of Buffett's life. *(Mar.)*

Lifestyle

Cooking

Eat Your Flowers

Loria Stern. Morrow, $40 (304p) ISBN 978-0-06-320426-3

California chef Stern uses botanicals to craft eye-catching dishes in her offbeat debut. She starts with a guide to edible botanicals, outlining their flavor profiles and typical uses, and many of her recipes come with the option for several variations: gluten-free crackers can be made in an array of colors, while doughnuts baked with almond and coconut flour are tinted with "colorant dust" glazes (the chart showing how to achieve different tones using botanical ingredients is a handy reference). Some of Stern's dishes are familiar, like a kale Caesar salad with vegan dressing, and chicken poached with herbs, though others draw from more unconventional ingredients, such as turkey meatballs with lemongrass atop a coconut carrot sauce or flank steak rubbed with dandelion tea. Baked goods provide the best canvas for Stern's visual artistry, as she presents buttermilk biscuits with fresh herbs pressed into the surface and various desserts decorated with flowers, including shortbread cookies and a vegan cheesecake made with raw cashews. The recipes are as whimsical as they are unusual, and Stern's creativity is spotlighted throughout: long beans are braided into wreaths, purple potato disks are dotted with orange salmon roe, and a dark chocolate tart incorporates mushroom powder said to possess "magical superfood health powers." Nature-savvy chefs should give this a look. *Agent: Katherine Latshaw, Folio Literary Management. (Apr.)*

Everyday Grand: Soulful Recipes for Celebrating Life's Big and Small Moments

Jocelyn Delk Adams. Clarkson Potter, $32.50 (256p) ISBN 978-0-593-23621-5

In this peppy collection, *Grandbaby Cakes* blogger Adams encourages celebrating the everyday by "cooking and sharing that joy with others." Whether that means making a praline sweet potato pound cake to welcome autumn or serving salmon glazed with whiskey and sweet tea after getting a raise at work, Adams's flavorful recipes are suitable for nearly any occasion—with busy weeknights, for the most part, a notable exception. Home cooks will find themselves welcomed into Adams's kitchen by the touching, if sometimes twee, sense of occasion and feel-good family anecdotes ("Peach cobbler is my family's signature dessert, and Big Mama, whose cobbler was the best, inspired me to master it," Adams reminisces while introducing her tipsy buttered Baileys peach cobbler) and appreciate the precision of the expert tips (when grilling ribs—Moroccan-influenced with a date glaze, in this case—baste them with glaze only in the last 15 minutes of cooking, lest the sugars burn and char the meat). For home cooks looking to whip up soul food fare with a bit of flare, this is a quality guide. *Brandi Bowles, United Talent. (Mar.)*

Chiles and Smoke: BBQ, Grilling, and Other Fire Friendly Recipes with Spice and Flavor

Brad Prose. Harvard Common, $26.99 (192p) ISBN 978-0-7603-7811-3

Prose brings his *Chiles and Smoke* barbecue website to print in his winning debut, a collection of creative recipes "grounded in two simple but amazing things: chiles and smoke." He offers a brief introduction to different chili varieties while exploring their individual tastes, among them the Mexican guajillo and its "slight tang of cranberries" or the "leathery, fruity-flavored" ancho. He covers chili powders and sauces as well, showcasing standouts like a smoky coffee rub with ground espresso and cocoa powder, and an adobo sauce that's a "cornerstone" in his cooking. In a nod to his preference for combining flavors from different cultures, Prose unveils a gochujang chili con carne made with Korean chili paste, and Africa-inspired harissa beef tacos assembled from a chuck roast that's smoked for six hours. Adventurous readers will savor the vindaloo-spiced lamb lollipops and tandoori grilled lobster with lemon parsley aioli, while ribs fans will appreciate Prose's chili verde baby back pork ribs and beef ribs with an earthy barbacoa sauce. Those looking to change things up will find his take on Nashville hot chicken intriguing: the bird is brined in pickle juice before being smoked with a spicy rub, then bathed in a ketchup-based sauce. Backyard chefs will find plenty of unique and delicious eats here. *(Mar.)*

Brad Prose
CHILES
AND
SMOKE

Eating from Our Roots: 80+ Healthy Home-Cooked Favorites from Cultures Around the World

Maya Feller. Rodale, $30 (224p) ISBN 978-0-593-23508-9

"Disentangling ourselves from restrictive eating patterns and focusing on sustainable and enjoyable nourishment is liberating," declares dietitian Feller (*Southern Comfort Food Diabetes Cookbook*) in this wide-ranging exploration of healthy eating. Her intention to decolonize accepted notions of mindful eating is clear from the start, and she includes dishes and practices from the African diaspora and other non-Western cuisines to spotlight the foods that "have often been left out of health and culinary conversations." Feller enlists the help of seven expert chefs, offering creative dishes like savory French toast imbued with Indian spice and stuffed with cashew cream, or watermelon "steaks" treated to a marinade of beets, tamarind, and hibiscus leaves to intensify their color and add tart flavor notes. Her own Caribbean heritage is celebrated in several ways, including a coconut quick bread from Trinidad and Tobago and the vegetarian diet of Jamaica's Rastafarians, whose Ital stew contains pumpkin, plantains, okra, split peas, corn, and habanero pepper. Sprinkled throughout are essays that explore histories of global cuisines and track the ways ingredients spread through trade and enslavement. A helpful chart of plant-based substitutions for meat and dairy ingredients adds to the richness of this well-researched guide. Those seeking healthy recipes and culturally diverse fare will be pleased. *Agent: Josanne Lopez, Lopez Talent Management. (Jan.)*

Health & Fitness

Cheating Death: The New Science of Living Longer and Better

Rand McClain. Benbella, $24.95 (208p) ISBN 978-1-63774-040-8

This informative if impractical debut by physician McClain explores medical treatments that promise to help patients "live longer, heal faster, and feel better." He makes the standard case for eating right, exercising, and sleeping well, but the juiciest recommendations are the most futuristic. The author touts the promise of stem cell treatments for restoring damaged tissue and surveys the different types of stem cells, noting that somatic stem cells "replace or repair" specific kinds of cells while pluripotent cells can transform into any kind. Scientific explanations back up his suggestions, though readers might struggle to follow the jargon, such as McClain's contention that cryotherapy increases longevity "by reducing free radicals, increasing cellular respiration and thermogenesis." However, the author is careful not to oversell experimental therapies and cautions that while gene editing has shown promise in treating cancer and muscular dystrophy, it's "still in a developmental phase" and scientists haven't figured out how to prevent gene changes from "crossing over" into cells scientists didn't intend to alter. Suggestions to get one's genome sequenced and stem cells banked, meanwhile, don't address the prohibitive costs of these technologies. Nonetheless, this serves as a solid overview of pioneering treatments and makes for a stimulating glimpse into what the future of aging might look like. *(Jan.)*

The Immunity Solution: Seven Weeks to Living Healthier and Longer

Leo Nissola. Countryman, $28.95 (256p) ISBN 978-1-68268-763-5

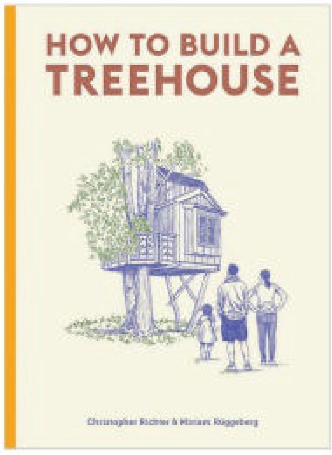
Immunologist Nissola debuts with an uneven program for boosting immune health, the centerpiece of which is his seven-week "Immunity Solution Protocol" that aims to help readers develop a healthier diet, sleep schedule, exercise regimen, and state of mind. Providing a thorough yet accessible explanation of the immune system, he describes how bone marrow generates the building blocks of a variety of immune cells, including macrophages that "patrol" skin looking for microbes and basophils that sound the alarm for other immune cells to attack foreign bodies. He discusses the role of bacteria in the gut, noting that Bacteroidetes (found in fruits and vegetables) reduce inflammation and Firmicutes "impair metabolism of glucose and fat." Readers will appreciate the seven-week program's wide-ranging perspective on how exercise and diet affect immune health, though the individual suggestions range from predictable to confounding: Sensible calls to get some sunlight and regular physical activity appear alongside far-fetched dietary recommendations to largely avoid fruits and vegetables because of the likelihood they contain pesticides ("The risk far outweighs the benefits"), with little explanation of how to overcome the nutritional consequences. Burdened by the drastic dietary advice, this is a mixed bag. *(Jan.)*

Hobbies & Crafts

How to Build a Treehouse

Christopher Richter and Miriam Rüggeberg. Laurence King, $24.99 (168p) ISBN 978-0-85782-905-4

Richter, a professional treehouse builder, and his wife Rüggeberg, who runs *Treehouseblog*, debut with a meticulous guide to making upscale treehouses for children or adults. Walking readers from design and preparation through construction and finishing the interior, the authors cover how to choose the right wood (larch is best for exteriors while spruce is preferred for the frame) and tools (cordless drills and a jigsaw are a must), and outline best practices for storing materials (place spacers between slats of wood to prevent mold). Detailed illustrations show each step of the process, including how to install tree attachment bolts and nail boards to the house's frame. The instructions are for a two-tiered structure that would be too advanced for novices, but the authors encourage readers to "adapt the methods we outline to your own project" and detail alternatives to their plan, including different ways to support the treehouse and style the siding. Those without a construction background will likely be overwhelmed by the exhaustive directions (the authors include a four-part formula for calculating baseboard spacing), but readers who already know a joist from a strut will appreciate the comprehensive guidance. Ambitious would-be treehouse builders will find all they need to get started. *(Mar.)*



Embroidered Crochet: Enchanting Projects to Crochet and Embroider

Anna Nikipirowicz. Search, $19.95 trade paper (96p) ISBN 978-1-78221-971-2

This cozy outing by Nikipirowicz (*Crocheted Wreaths for the Home*), a design consultant for Rowan Yarns, shows how to make pieces that combine crochet and embroidery. The 10 projects largely follow the same three-step process: crafters crochet and block a base, iron reusable design patterns onto the base, and then embroider the transferred images. The author provides an overview of necessary equipment and instructions on how to crochet and embroider, making this accessible for readers who only have background in one or the other. Projects include pillows, pennants, a basket, and a small tapestry, ranging in difficulty from small coasters with radishes and parsnips embroidered onto them to the more time-intensive blanket, adorned with a goldfinch, sparrow, and other birds. Nature lovers will delight at the cheerful plants and animals that feature prominently in the designs, such as the bluebells, buttercups, and forget-me-nots on the "wildflower wall hanging," and the foxes and mushrooms on the "woodland pennant garland." Additionally, the ample photos make it a breeze to get the hang of the needlework. Crocheters looking to change things up will take to these cute pieces. *(Mar.)*

Colour Crochet Unlocked: The Ultimate How-To Guide

Jane Howorth and Dawn Curran. Search, $24.95 trade paper (160p) ISBN 978-1-78221-977-4

British designers Howorth and Curran debut with an arresting take on how to incorporate colorwork into crochet. The authors showcase 40 stitch patterns that provide a great starting place for beginners, with highlights including a net-like pattern punctuated by flowers and a wavy blue, green, and pink design. Upping the complexity, Howorth and Curran outline four crochet techniques that are more intricate with their colorwork: Fair Isle, intarsia, mosaic, and tapestry. The bulkiness of Fair Isle, they write, makes it well suited for cold weather while intarsia is ideal for creating images or words. Ten projects show the stitch patterns and techniques at work, as in the standout "trinity basket," which uses the tapestry technique to create triangular patterns, and the Fair Isle "Zahra hat" and mittens, which feature a design inspired by "flowers blooming in a well-planted garden." Howorth and Curran offer useful tips on how to pick colors and work with multiple strands of yarn ("alternate the turn direction" at the end of a row), but novices might find some of the techniques difficult to follow, especially the chart for mosaic, which operates differently than the standard charts. Intermediate to advanced crocheters will enjoy the vibrant patterns. *(Feb.)*

Macramé Jewellery: 20 Stylish Modern Projects Using Simple Knots

Isabella Strambio. Search, $16.95 trade paper (80p) ISBN 978-1-78221-966-8

In this chic guide, macramé artist Strambio (*Macramé for the Modern Home*) shows how to create knotted jewelry. To help beginners get started, she provides instructions for creating basic knots and knotting patterns and offers guidance on choosing types of string, noting that braided string doesn't unravel while suede string's softness makes it ideal for bracelets and necklaces. The 20 projects include such boho-style accessories as a diamond-patterned headband, earrings with unraveled string made to look like feathers, and a necklace made of black tassels tied to a wooden ring. Strambio also shows how to make a white and teal belt, a white camera strap, and a white and terracotta–colored keyring with knots that resemble daisies. Sharing tips of the craft, the author recommends wrapping the end of a string with masking tape to avoid fraying when adding beads (as in her gold-bead bracelet) and using a pet brush to straighten unraveled fringes. Macramé novices will appreciate the simple yet elegant designs, and though the projects are light on visual instruction, the author's directions are easy to follow. Those eager to try macramé would do well to start here. *(Jan.)*

Knotting Natural Bags and Belts: 18 Macramé Projects to Accessorize Your Everyday Wardrobe

Stacy Summer Malimban. Fox Chapel, $17.99 trade paper (112p) ISBN 978-1-4971-0141-8

Malimban, owner of the online macramé

store Knotty by Nature, debuts with an easy-to-follow primer on creating macramé bags and belts. She recounts learning macramé to make decorations for her “Camp Boho”–themed wedding, which led her to open an Etsy store for her work. To help readers craft her designs, she offers an overview of necessary supplies, recommending measuring tape, combs to tease out tassels, and corkboard and push-pins to hold projects in place while one works. Malimban prioritizes “repetitive basic knots” in her designs to keep them beginner-friendly and shows how to craft a pink open-weave “net bag” and a fringed white “phone holder bag” mostly made of square knots. A broader variety of knots are used in the belts, which include the “zigzag pattern belt” and the relatively ornate “diamond-pattern belt with wooden rings.” The ample photos illustrating each step make the designs easy to follow, and the tone is fun throughout (“Let’s get knotty!”), even if Malimban sometimes goes overboard with puns (“Make sure you do *knot* cut the cord off before untying it”). Novices will appreciate these charming, simple projects. *(Jan.)*

knotting natural
BAGS & BELTS
20 Macramé Projects to Accessorize Your Every Wardrobe

Home & Garden

A Garden’s Purpose: Cultivating Our Connection with the Natural World

Félix de Rosen. Princeton Architectural Press, $29.95 (192p) ISBN 978-1-79722-244-8

This meditative debut from ecological designer de Rosen waxes poetic about the beauty of gardens. “Everybody has a deep spiritual connection to the Earth, so everybody can garden,” contends de Rosen as he outlines a philosophical approach to garden design based on examples from around the world. He suggests that gardens can inspire wonder by changing how people relate to their surroundings and notes that in the dry garden of a Zen Buddhist temple outside Kyoto, Japan, it’s impossible to see all the garden’s 15 stones at once, communicating the “Zen belief that reality cannot be fully understood.” Positing that “edges help us appreciate difference,” de Rosen finds inspiration in Paris landscapers who transformed an asphalt courtyard into a garden and used broken shards of asphalt to decorate the garden’s perimeter. He encourages readers to see plants as creating “garden rooms” and shows how the canopies of elm trees in Central Park come together to look “like the vaults of a cathedral.” Though de Rosen focuses on theory more than application, gardeners will find no shortage of inspiration in the enlightening design perspectives and gorgeous photos of green spaces across the globe. Smart and beautifully rendered, this has the power to change how gardeners approach their work. *(Mar.)*

At Home with Nature: A Guide to Sustainable, Natural Landscaping

John Gidding. Countryman, $32.50 (192p) ISBN 978-1-68268-709-3

Gidding, the host of HGTV’s *Curb Appeal Xtreme*, debuts with a rewarding guide to eco-friendly landscaping. Environmental health “depends upon our capacity to adopt responsible strategies of landscape design, allowing a mix of spaces for people and wildlife, without taxing limited resources,” contends Gidding, and to that end he advocates for using indigenous flora and emulating nature when landscaping. He criticizes grass lawns as ecologically irresponsible because they consume “30% of America’s precious drinking water” and promote harmful pesticide use. As an alternative, Gidding outlines his “sylvan design” philosophy that takes inspiration from the asymmetry of the natural world and encourages readers to use a mixture of native shrubs, trees, and ground cover. He details six sample blueprints for what lawns in different regions of the U.S. might look like and lists plants that thrive in each region, noting that Pacific rhododendron grow quickly and are well suited to the Northwest while sugarberry trees in the Midwest attract birds with their date-like fruit. Recommendations to completely overhaul grass lawns mean that novice gardeners might feel overwhelmed, but those ready to take the plunge will appreciate the helpful tips, including a thorough breakdown of how to draw a site plan. Readers looking to upgrade their yards while making them more sustainable will find this to be a great starting point. *(Feb.)*

Parenting

Enough About the Baby: A Brutally Honest Guide to Surviving the First Year of Motherhood

Becky Vieira. Union Square, $17 trade paper (336p) ISBN 978-1-4549-4799-8

In this intimate manual, Vieira (*PR You!*), who reflects on motherhood as WittyOtter on Instagram, dispenses guidance for surviving the first year after childbirth. Recounting the difficulties she faced after having her son, including postpartum depression and fights with her husband, Vieira shares with expecting and recent mothers “everything I wish I had known,” such as what to expect at the hospital, what to do after taking one’s baby home, and how to find childcare. Insights from obstetricians, lactation consultants, and other experts are peppered throughout, including recommendations to get infants on a sleep schedule by developing a bedtime routine and that breastfeeding doesn’t have “to be all or nothing.” The most revelatory material deals with the negative aspects of motherhood, as when Vieira recounts the guilt she felt about not immediately loving her newborn until she learned that this is normal because the “brain is set to first feel an obligation to take care of and protect our baby, and by doing that we bond with them.” Vieira’s candor about her struggles as a new mother and the input from experts results in a volume that’s at once practical and deeply personal. This is a must for new and mothers-to-be. *(Mar.)*

The Emotional Lives of Teenagers: Raising Connected, Capable, and Compassionate Adolescents

Lisa Damour. Ballantine, $28 (256p) ISBN 978-0-593-50001-9

This enlightening outing by psychologist Damour (*Under Pressure*) advises parents on how they can help their children navigate the emotional turmoil of their teenage years. Drawing on neuroscience and client stories from her practice, Damour provides psychological background on the changes that teens go through while dispensing guidance on how parents can best support them. She explains that during adolescence, the brain undergoes a "physiological renovation" that only reaches the prefrontal cortex—responsible for higher-order thinking—late in the process, meaning teenagers often struggle to "maintain a sense of perspective." Her sensitive approach for supporting teens who question their gender identity urges parents to "treat your teenager as the driver of their own gender car" and refrain from patronizing them or suggesting they're just "going through a phase." Client stories illuminate the advice, as when Damour recounts a session with parents concerned about their daughter's fixation on her fear that they might die early and suggests that for teens struggling to control their emotions, thinking about plans or playing a game can help get their mind off the subject. Damour's down-to-earth tone gives this the feel of a conversation with a friend, while the psychology offers valuable perspective into the scientific underpinnings of adolescence. Parents of teens will want to check this out. *(Feb.)*

Religion/Spirituality

The Other Evangelicals: A Story of Liberal, Black, Progressive, Feminist, and Gay Christians—and the Movement That Pushed Them Out

Isaac B. Sharp. Eerdmans, $34.99 (384p) ISBN 978-0-80288-175-5

Sharp, a professor of theological studies at Union Theological Seminary, debuts with a richly detailed history of forgotten progressive evangelical figures. While American evangelicalism is defined today by religious, social, and political conservatism (embodied by figures like Billy Graham), it wasn't always so, writes Sharp, noting how, as a postwar conservative movement spread through American evangelicalism, "dissenters" who tried to "carve out space for an alternative kind of evangelicalism" were marginalized or excommunicated. Among this group were Howard O. Jones, who in 1957 became the first Black pastor to serve as an "associate evangelist" for the Graham crusade (though he experienced racism in the church); Letha Dawson Scanzoni, a founding member of the Evangelical Women's Caucus, who wrote lightning-rod articles criticizing the idea of women's spiritual inferiority to men; and Jim Wallis, founder of the progressive Christian magazine *Sojourners*. Still, the march of conservative evangelicalism continued, and by the 21st century, the movement mostly stood for antiliberalism, antifeminism, and antimodernism. Big changes are unlikely, the author suggests, because historically those who tried to do so "were cast out or... walked away." Sharp skillfully brings the complexities of evangelicalism alive, and his meticulous research and careful analysis casts its history in a new light. This will fascinate scholars of American religion. *(Apr.)*

But Then She Remembered: How to Give God Your Full Attention in a Distracted World

Katie Westenberg. Bethany House, $16.99 trade paper (192p) ISBN 978-0-764-23542-9

"What is the real risk of becoming comfortable with a distracted life?" wonders *I Choose Brave* blogger Westenberg in this middling entry. Today's social media–filled world, fueled by restless "pinball patterns of thinking," is diminishing believers' attention spans and their relationships with God, Westenberg contends. Often, she writes, "we're just too busy scrolling... to engage with Him." Mixing anecdotes from her life and scriptural references, Westenberg tackles different elements of memory and distraction, and considers how to approach each with a godly focus. A chapter on managing time, for instance, distinguishes between unhelpful "distractions" and potentially enriching "interruptions," such as when Jesus "stopped what he was doing, and tended to the needy hearts" when accosted by followers as he entered new cities. She also suggests that, even when "change and time" feel unstable, God remains the "unchanging ruler." Elsewhere, the author discusses the importance of remembering through retelling, which reflects believers' mission to be "relentless sharers of [God's] truth." Though Westenberg's sermonesque tone (and habit of addressing the reader as "friend") can be off-putting, her unabashed encouragement bolsters the earnest if predictable argument for the transformative power of God's love. Believers looking to put down the phone would do well to pick this up. *(Apr.)*

Please, Sorry, Thanks: The Three Words that Change Everything

Mark Batterson. Multnomah, $22 (176p) ISBN 978-0-593-19279-5

Pastor Batterson (*Win the Day*) stresses the power of the three "magic words" in this optimistic outing. "Our words create the world," the author writes, and here he invites readers to consider "the psychology of please, the science of sorry, and the theology of thanks." Drawing on biblical examples, research, and personal anecdotes, Batterson explores each word as a life-informing principle. *Please*, for instance, "show[s] respect, even to those we disagree with," and evokes the instinct to serve others (just as Jesus washed his disciples' feet). And while "few things take more courage" than saying sorry, doing so is important, as it requires harnessing Godly empathy. *Thanks* can inspire a deeper gratitude for God's miracles, whether a sunrise or the act of breathing ("You have 25 trillion red blood cells... which deliver oxygen atoms on time, every time"). Batterson intersperses questions throughout ("Are there any miracles you're complaining about?") to help readers find their faith within the everyday, and his conversational tone appeals alongside periodic gems that cut to the heart of things ("We confess our sin to God for forgiveness. We confess our sin to each other for healing"). This earnest entry offers believers abundant inspiration. *(Apr.)*

The Three Words
That Change Everything
PLEASE
SORRY
THANKS
Mark Batterson
New York Times Bestselling Author

Armageddon: What the Bible Really Says About the End

Bart D. Ehrman. Simon & Schuster, $27.99 (272p) ISBN 978-1-982-14799-0

Ehrman (*Heaven and Hell*), a religious studies professor at the University of North Carolina, tackles the Book of Revelation in this ambitious but uneven survey. Written by the apostle John in exile, the "bizarre and unapproachable" text details God's final judgments, which makes it especially relevant to consider in today's "apocalyptic times," Ehrman writes. Setting out a history of eschatological predictions, the author surveys dispensational premillenialism, a 19th-century school of thought that holds that Christ will return twice, and Christian Zionism, which calls for the mass return of Jews to Israel to "set the stage" for Jesus's return. Examining passages about the apocalypse in Daniel and Ezekiel, the author concludes that literalist interpretations have gotten it wrong: Revelation was written for John's era, and its "exaggerated claims" offered possible salvation to the day's Christians and punishment for their Roman oppressors. Gentler interpretations, meanwhile, are wishful thinking. Instead, he argues, the book isn't reflective of God's true nature at all. Despite the rigor Ehrman brings to the table, there is surprisingly little discussion about first-century apocalyptic literature (including the writing of the Essenes), and Ehrman spends a lot of time debunking others' views rather than making a case for his own. There are some bright moments, but this falls short of its lofty aims. *(Mar.)*

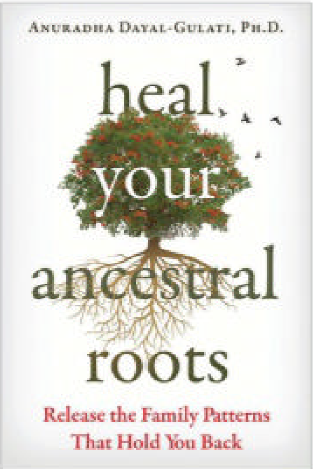
Sensual Faith: The Art of Coming Home to Your Body

Lyvonne Briggs. Convergent, $26 (208p) ISBN 978-0-593-44319-4

Pastor Briggs debuts with a powerful affirmation of body acceptance for Black women. Though "colonized religion" has "made us feel like our bodies are… mere apparatuses that we need to subdue," loving one's body, she posits, is intrinsic to loving God. Drawing on a womanist perspective, Briggs outlines a blueprint for Black women to surmount religious shame and love their bodies. Central to her program is recognizing that capitalism does harm by positioning the body as an instrument of productivity, as do outdated forms of Christianity that view female sexuality as "evil." It's also important to realize that one's physical urges are "divinely designed," and, as such, Briggs emphasizes the importance of healthy sexual relationships and devotes a chapter to setting up masturbation as a "gift from God." And while topics like miscarriage and abortion are frequently brushed aside in church environments, Briggs advises readers to address them head on and seek communal support. Throughout, the author dispenses tried-and-true wisdom that encourages readers to listen to their bodies and honor their physical agency (for example, by setting healthy boundaries). More a philosophical reframing than a guide, this offering takes an upbeat approach to bodily acceptance, and Briggs's pastoral perspective lends depth to its theological underpinnings. Black women looking to love themselves while loving God will find much to gain. *(Mar.)*

Heal Your Ancestral Roots: Release the Family Patterns That Hold You Back

Anuradha Dayal-Gulati. Findhorn, $18.99 trade paper (272p) ISBN 978-1-644-11774-3


Anuradha Dayal-Gulati, Ph.D.
heal your ancestral roots
Release the Family Patterns That Hold You Back

In this compassionate entry, personal development coach Dayal-Gulati (*Global Corporate Citizenship*) charts a path for readers to heal from ancestral trauma. While those who find themselves emotionally stuck tend to resort to external fixes—changing jobs, ending relationships—it's often necessary, the author writes, to address deep internal forces, such as harmful "ancestral energy patterns," that recur across generations as a result of damage to the "family energy field." To achieve healing, she suggests "family constellation therapy," in which practicers process deep-rooted ancestral pain by, for example, rewriting their "parental stories" in order to release unaddressed suffering: the observation "I have felt unloved," can morph into a more healing insight, such as "I know my mother was too depressed to express her love to me." Tackling transgenerational pain can also include meditating on shame-causing family secrets and learning to emotionally let go of negative energy. Dayal-Gulati also recommends ingesting specific flower essences: honeysuckle can help release limiting memories, while wild rose treats apathy. This entry takes a nuanced approach to addressing family suffering, and readers will find her advice actionable and cathartic. Dayal-Gulati's wisdom will easily attract the spiritually inclined. *(Mar.)*

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NONFICTION

The Critic's Daughter: A Memoir *Priscilla Gilman.* Norton, ISBN 978-0-39365-132-4, Feb.

Parsimony and Other Radical Ideas About Justice, *edited by Jeremy Travis and Bruce Western.* New Press, ISBN 978-1-62097-755-2, Feb.

Roe: The History of a National Obsession *Mary Ziegler.* Yale Univ., ISBN 978-0-300-26610-8, Jan.

Let's Talk About Doubt: A Story of Doubt, Faith and Life in Between

Kat Wordsworth. Circle, $15.95 trade paper (144p) ISBN 978-1-803-41156-9

Wordsworth recounts her quest to understand religious doubt in her thought-provoking debut. The author grew up with an outwardly impeccable Christian faith: she boasted "perfect [church] attendance from the womb onward," attended Christian youth groups, and otherwise "ticked every Christian box possible"—but had long felt spiritually empty. At 21, she attended a worship leaders conference where she felt so alienated by other attendants' "certainty, passion, [and] faith" that she broke down, an event that spurred her investigation of her religious doubt and, eventually, efforts to forge a new relationship with God. Wordsworth shares short, diaristic meditations on her inquiry (on losing her faith: "I'm not sure how much longer I can go on… going to church is emotional torture") before landing on a reframed day-to-day practice that recognizes God in common "moments of goodness" and accommodates some doubt as a natural part of religious identity. This offering provides a deeply candid look into a mind at war with its faith, and Wordsworth's raw emotion will resonate with readers who have found themselves in similar situations. The doubting Christian is sure to find solace in Wordsworth's story. *(Mar.)*

Children's/YA

Picture Books

Harold the Iceberg Melts Down (Harold the Iceberg #1)

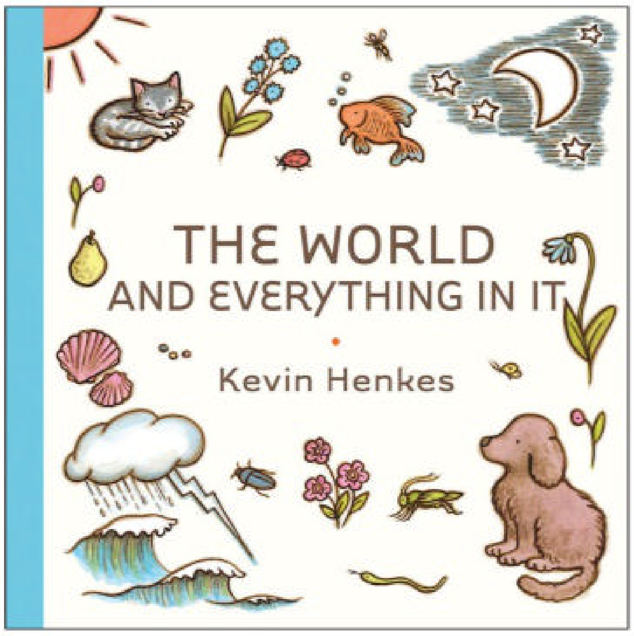
Lisa Wyzlic, illus. by Rebecca Syracuse. Macmillan/Feiwel and Friends, $18.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-250-83062-3

A refrigerator denizen's misunderstanding becomes a call to action in this author and illustrator debut, a punny tale of food friends tackling anxiety and climate change. Harold, a head of iceberg lettuce known for his worrywart ways, comes unglued when he watches a documentary about the world's quickly melting icebergs, the image of which matches a crumpled produce sticker on his behind: "*I* am an iceberg. See?" A different kind of meltdown ensues as Harold rattles off factoids while becoming increasingly distressed: "Did you know the icebergs are MELTING? At an ALARMING RATE?!" Supportive foodstuffs try to help, but nothing works until a bok choy buddy offers reassurance, clarifying Harold's reality. Newly recharged and still concerned, Harold recruits his fellow fridge pals in crafting a plan to save "MY COUSINS!"—the other icebergs in crisis. With humor and a light touch, Wyzlic balances brief expository passages with emotional dialogue. Syracuse's digitally rendered anthropomorphic foods feature noodly stick limbs, expressive eyes, and enjoyable edible details, among them a chair made of bread and olives, a butterstick TV stand, and a hot-sauce mustache. Back matter offers tips for combating climate change. Ages 3–6. *Author's agent: Natascha Morris, Tobias Literary. (Mar.)*

★ Corner

ZO-O, trans. from the Korean by Ellen Jang. Owlkids, $19.95 (64p) ISBN 978-1-77147-532-7

This mostly wordless picture book opens as a black, crow-like bird contemplates the empty corner of the title, which fits neatly into the gutter between the pages. The floor is gray and the walls are high, white, and blank, an effect amplified by the book's long, tall trim size. First staring up at the utterly bare corner, the bird gets to work, moving furniture and personal effects into the space—a bed, a rug, a bookcase, then a lamp and small green plant. "Hello?" it greets the plant. For the first time, the bird seems to relax, reading near the foliage, then pouring water over it and tucking in to sleep nearby. "Hmm. What else?" it asks. Soon, other ideas take shape, and the figure begins an ambitious mural that requires a handful of other objects: a radio, spare art supplies, and an increasingly tall ladder. South Korean creator ZO-O draws the corner from precisely the same angle throughout, the better to emphasize its transformation. It's a cleverly wrought tale of growth, inventiveness, and how an impulse to nurture brings life into a space, allowing a being to thrive. Ages 3–7. *(Mar.)*



Henkes considers relative size in a picture book about what makes up the world (reviewed on p. 76).

Gloria's Promise: A Ballet Dancer's First Step

Robin Preiss Glasser and Jacqueline Preiss Weitzman, illus. by Robin Preiss Glasser. Random House Studio, $18.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-59318-100-3

Sisters Glasser and Weitzman (*You Can't Take a Balloon into the Metropolitan Museum*) reteam for this experiential tale, produced in partnership with American Ballet Theatre, of a young dancer determined to be admitted to ABT's summer intensive. Gloria encourages herself internally ("*Take a deep breath. You've got this*") as she and her mother, both portrayed with pale skin, battle snowy New York City streets and a crowded subway en route to the audition. After signing in among a bevy of children portrayed with varying skin tones, Gloria takes a wrong turn and stumbles onto backstage wonders: a room filled with pointe shoes, dancers at a costume fitting and—breathtakingly—a company rehearsal in progress. A fall tempers Gloria's confident exuberance at the audition, but she soldiers on, demonstrating resilience. Glasser's signature art style exudes Gloria's love for dance, while a series of energetic spot illustrations delineate the slow passage of time as she awaits the important news. Slipping in a vocabulary lesson for "promise" as both potential and vow, the creators render a lively paean to passion and persistence via a sympathetic protagonist who knows that "*This is where I want to be*." Ages 4–7. *(Mar.)*

A Unicorn, a Dinosaur, and a Shark Walk into a Book

Jonathan Fenske. Penguin Workshop, $18.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-593-51947-9

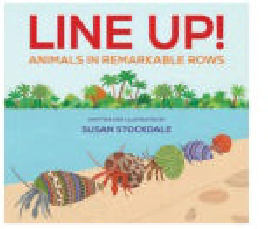
Young readers may not be familiar with the classic joke setup echoed in the title, but this meta take on the pains of crafting an engaging story will have them smiling all the same. Things get off to a rocky start when an unseen narrator delivers the titular opening line, only to find that the trio of characters—boldly outlined against spare backgrounds—doesn't comply. "Sharks can't walk!/ And dinosaurs stomp!/ I don't walk. I prance," they variously protest, requiring a tweak to the initial text. And when the narrator subsequently suggests that "this just might be the best book ever!" the unwieldy protagonists take their creator down a peg, responding, "It's okay, I guess./ Where's the food?/ Meh. I have been in better books." The plot threatens to lag ("Soooo... what's next?") until the inspired introduction of a fourth character—a kitten sporting a T-shirt—provides a spark of excitement among the original three while creating a dramatic denouement that breaks the fourth wall. Alongside a now-familiar cartoon art style that holds much appeal for early readers, all-dialogue text by Fenske (*When Carrot Met Cookie*) drives the pace quickly. Ages 4–8. *Agent: Carrie Hannigan, HG Literary. (Mar.)*

Measures Animalian

Five picture books celebrate ingenious animal adaptations.

Line Up! Animals in Remarkable Rows

Susan Stockdale. Peachtree, $18.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-68263-322-9



"Have you ever been asked/ to line up in a row?/ Some animals do this/ when they're on the go!" Beginning with a question that connects animalian experiences to those of human children, Stockdale's jolly rhyming exploration of animal queues relays habits of birds, crustaceans, mammals, and more following a leader across diverse habitats. Upbeat narration directs and educates, detailing, for example, a spotted puffer lining up to be cleaned by other fish, and a hermit crab readying to select a new shell. While some critters go single-file to hunt or migrate, others relax: "Line up, tired turtle,/ and rest on a back./ Cozy up close/ while you're propped in a stack." Digitally styled acrylic art foregrounds wildlife sequences amid flat-hued natural environments: a procession of ants crawl up a tulip's stalk; shrews chain through layers of autumn leaves. When fairywrens nestle in a sleepy string, it's a chance to bid the reader good night following the fun- and fact-filled creature parade. Back matter offers more facts about each animal. Ages 2–5. *(Jan.)*

A Llama Is Not an Alpaca: And Other Mistaken Animal Identities

Karen Jameson, illus. by Lorna Scobie. Running Press Kids, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-7624-7878-1

Employing puns, rhymes, and light interactivity, Jameson and Scobie probe the features that distinguish perceived animal look-alikes. Spreads encourage debate as subjects are introduced in a quiz format ("Puffin? Penguin in the sky?/ Which seabird can really fly?"), and page turns reveal the answers with playfully explanatory prose ("Waddle, waddle! Weighing just over a pound, puffins are light enough for flight"). Comparisons vary in difficulty and range across species pairings, which include hares/rabbits, clams/oysters, frogs/toads, as well as the titular llama/alpaca. Scobie uses soft-edged, scribbly graphic techniques to showcase friendly looking species as they mingle and gaze with big googly eyes. When the motley group comes together in a final smile-filled scene, it's to celebrate the reader's savvy and reinforce the wildly informative fun on display. Ages 4–8. *(Mar.)*

One Tiny Treefrog: A Countdown to Survival

Tony Piedra and Mackenzie Joy. Candlewick, $18.99 (40p) ISBN 978-1-5362-1948-7

Piedra and Joy provide a matter-of-fact primer on a tree frog's life cycle, emphasizing the slim odds of survival faced by tadpoles maturing into adults. Luminous emerald pages open as "Ten tiny tadpoles grow in their eggs." Their number soon begins to dwindle as first nine "wiggle free" and then only eight "plunge into a watery new home," where new threats await. As the group's number shrinks, labeled digital renderings feature a range of predators that seem to be taking a toll on them, including the social wasp, wolf cichlid, and carmine skimmer. When only "two nimble tadpoles" remain, a spectacled caiman looks on from the depths and makes a sudden "SNAP" that leaves a lone "resilient" survivor: "Zero tiny tadpoles./ One tiny treefrog." Simple, spare text is balanced by the countdown's drama, and lengthy back matter rounds out the book's educational aspects. Ages 4–8. *(Feb.)*

We're Not Weird: Structure and Function in the Animal Kingdom

Michael Garland. Holiday House, $18.99 (48p) ISBN 978-0-8234-5102-9

Spotlighting unique adaptive features, Garland profiles fish, fowl, insects, and mammals whose "special body parts" help them "survive and thrive" just like any other animal that needs "food, air, and water to live." Fact-filled first-person accounts begin with each animal's characteristic before the owner reveals itself: "I hope to attract a mate. That's why I dance and show off my bright blue webbed feet. I am a blue-footed booby." Realistic earth-toned art with scratchboard textures highlights the attribute described: a star-nosed mole nudges out a worm; a platypus appears with food in its "electro-sensitive" bill. Creatures such as the desert tortoise and narwhal are well-known; others, however, including the tusked babirusa and the crocodilian gharial, make for delightfully atypical picture book fodder. The impressive utility of the features on display reinforces the group's opening and closing declaration: "We're not weird." Facts and a glossary conclude. Ages 4–8. *(Jan.)*

Darwin's Super-Pooping Worm Spectacular

Polly Owen, illus. by Gwen Millward. Wide Eyed, $19.99 (32p) ISBN 978-0-7112-7597-3

Owen presents a seldom appreciated corner of the life and work of Charles Darwin (1809–1882) in this true story of how earthworms wriggled their way into his heart. While others of the era believed worms to be pests, "Darwin KNEW worms were amazing." With comic flair and a mix of narration and conversational text, Owen outlines the scientist's experiments to discover their superpower, testing their sight, hearing, and sense of smell, and leading to a "spectacular" public exhibition that amuses with worms that dance to piano and compete in a "speed-eating challenge." Upon finally discovering the important role worm castings play in global ecosystems, Darwin declares, "What a fantastic pile of poop." Millward's fashionable digital renderings have a sketch-like quality and personify the worms throughout. A fascinating slice of scientific history, the spirited tale concludes with facts and references. Ages 6–9. *(Jan.)*

The World and Everything in It

Kevin Henkes. Greenwillow, $19.99 (32p)
ISBN 978-0-06-324564-8

Serene reflectiveness flows through this meditation by Henkes (*Little Houses*), whose simple prose initially segments the universe into two camps: "big things and little things." An early spread shows both: a grown, gnarled tree is pictured against billowing clouds on a grassy rise; a seedling grows beside it. In subsequent pages, framed spreads display diminutive entities: "Little animals.// Tiny flowers.// Pebbles.// Things so small you can't see them." Shown against backgrounds of white, they evoke the objective calm of encyclopedia illustrations. Next come the big things, including "The sea.// The sun.// The moon." Humans are in the middle, and able to interact with both, having "some of the little things"—spreads show children of various skin tones holding the items—and fragments of big things, too. "The moon is big,/ but you can see all of it/ out the window in your bedroom." But how big is big? How small is small? "Most of the things are in-between," straightforward text concludes. "Like you./ And me." Spare images and text, and an almost reverent stream of thought, helps illuminate humans' comparative scale in the wide, variously populated world. Ages 4–8. *(Mar.)*

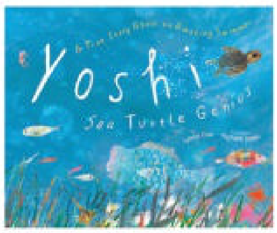
Yoshi on the Move

Two picture books follow a sea turtle's epic journey.

★ Yoshi, Sea Turtle Genius: A True Story About an Amazing Swimmer

Lynne Cox, illus. by Richard Jones. Random House/Schwartz, $18.99 (40p) ISBN 978-0-593-42568-8

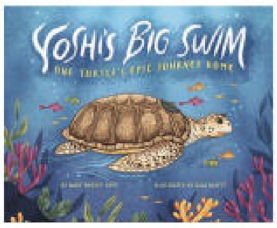
Long-distance swimmer Cox presents this fictionalized story that follows Yoshi, the loggerhead turtle who spent 20 years in a South African aquarium before swimming nearly 23,000 miles back to her native Australia. A straightforward narrative couches playful, lyrical text that details Yoshi's hatching, reports on physical changes over time ("She was just the size of a smile"), and lists myriad creatures she likely encountered on land and sea ("a whale shark as big as a school bus"). Lines that visualize the journey ("Her body glowed in a blanket of sparkling water") complement Jones's delicately textured, digitally edited paintings, which portray sea life in muted hues and envision Yoshi's diminutive form against a wide-open ocean. Several light-infused night scenes bestow a calming ambiance upon a succinctly told story that's satisfying in its full-circle itinerary and its appreciation of the sea turtle's innate "genius." Human characters are portrayed with various skin tones. An author's note, archival photo of Yoshi, and map conclude. Ages 4–8. *(Jan.)*



Yoshi's Big Swim: One Turtle's Epic Journey Home

Mary Wagley Copp, illus. by Kaja Kajfež. Capstone, $17.99 (32p) ISBN 978-1-6844-6535-4

Copp and Kajfež's child-friendly take on the famous loggerhead's incredible story focuses mainly on Yoshi's life before her nearly 23,000-mile swim back to her Australian breeding grounds. Colorful, cartoon-style illustrations depict her rescue, her rehabbing at a South African aquarium (becoming "Queen of the Ocean Exhibit" and growing to 400 pounds), and the endurance training there that readied her for a return to the sea ("She trained for a year and a half, swimming between divers who enticed her with sea squirts"). The narrative personifies the tenacious turtle, emphasizing through a refrain ("and she crept into their hearts") Yoshi's impact on her human caretakers and admirers. On the fifth anniversary of her ocean release, this animated account will also endear her to young readers. Human characters are portrayed as racially diverse. Back matter about Yoshi and loggerhead turtles concludes. Ages 8–10. *(Jan.)*



Early Readers

★ Elena Rides

Juana Medina. Candlewick, $9.99 (32p)
ISBN 978-1-5362-1635-6

She's eager, she's resilient, she has a two-wheeler and a red feathered friend—but Elena, the enthusiastic purple elephant star of this early reader, still has a ways to go to polish her cycling skills. As the view zooms in, capturing Elena's look of expectant pleasure at donning a green cycling helmet, Medina (*'Twas the Night Before Pride*) kicks off the elephant's on-the-move story with maximum verve: "Elena wants to ride./ Elena buckles her helmet." Rhythmic couplets and plenty of action verbs reveal what happens next as Elena takes off, tongue sticking out—"she pushes,/ she pedals!// She wobbles,/ and bobbles..."—and meets the first of several disasters: "KA-BANG!" She gets up and tries again, but a second fall hits harder: "Elena cries!/ She bawls!" (Her bird friend puts small wings around Elena's leg.) The next ride gets Elena a little farther, her trunk sticking triumphantly out as she "goes, goes, goes," but there's more action and drama to come before, in a moment of victory, "Elena rides!" Medina captures substantial emotional highs and lows in this inspiring tale of persistence, one that's just right for those taking on another learning curve: reading. A dual English/Spanish edition publishes simultaneously. Ages 4–6. *(Mar.)*

Fiction

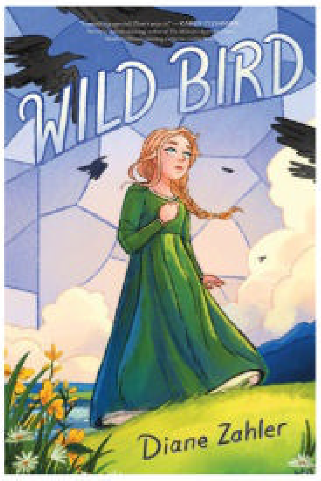
What Stays Buried

Suzanne Young. HarperCollins, $18.99 (272p)
ISBN 978-0-0632-5712-2

In her middle grade debut, Young (the Girls with Sharp Sticks series) spins a high-stakes, fast-moving ghost story emphasizing intergenerational family connections. Twelve-year-old medium Calista Wynn inherited both her family's gift for communing with the dead and the family curse that will cause her to lose that power on her 13th birthday, the age her aunt Virginia died. Dreading the approaching birthday, which will also strip her of the ability to maintain a relationship with her late father and grandmother, Calista encounters a new terror when Edwina Swift, the ghost of Virginia's murderer, returns to exact revenge on the descendants of the town vigilantes who executed her. As Edwina abducts children and churns up a powerful dark spell, Calista races against her fading gift to stop Edwina before she can claim her next intended victim, Calista's younger sister—the youngest Wynn girl with the family powers. Young employs spine-tingling horror tropes to drum up suspense, pitting a stock villain against a heroic magical family to drive the plot toward its reckoning. A consequential magic system facilitates explorations of grief and closure after loss. Characters default to white. Ages 8–12. *Agent: Lane Heymont, Tobias Agency. (Mar.)*

★ Wild Bird

Diane Zahler. Roaring Brook, $18.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-2508-3340-2



Zahler (*Goblin Market*) transports readers to 14th-century Europe during the height of the black plague in this searing novel for fans of gritty historical fare. When a girl is found cowering in a hollow tree in Norway, she has sparse clothing, no food, and no memories, including of her name. Coaxed out of her hiding spot by British shipmaster's son Owen, and called Rype—or Wild Bird—by his father, she joins them at sea. Interstitials recall the tragedy that preceded these events, and primarily first-person narration details Rype's subsequent experiences wandering the European countryside with Owen and a band of troubadours. Yet the plague follows close behind, perpetually threatening the found family with violence, suspicion, and death, and Rype realizes that it is just one of many dangers on the road. Zahler unflinchingly depicts a world in chaos due to disease, drawing contemporary parallels and thoughtfully highlighting issues of power structures, collective trauma, and remembrance. While deep bonds are formed throughout the telling, Rype's processing her grief and finding her purpose form the character-forward story's core, making for a novel of strength and vulnerability that will appeal particularly to readers of *The Book of Boy* and *Northwind*. Characters default to white. An end note provides additional historical context. Ages 8–12. *Agent: Jennifer Laughran, Andrea Brown Literary. (Mar.)*

★ Bea and the New Deal Horse

L.M. Elliott. HarperCollins/Tegen, $19.99 (384p) ISBN 978-0-063219-00-7

In a richly characterized novel set against a precisely drawn Great Depression backdrop, a resourceful 13-year-old enters horse competitions to stave off bankruptcy at her adopted home. Awakening in the hayloft of a once-grand Virginia horse farm, Beatrice Davis is horrified to discover that her father has abandoned her and her eight-year-old sister, Vivian, "like unwanted kittens." Claiming that he cannot care for them, the former banker leaves a note suggesting that they appeal to the farm's owner, Mrs. Scott, whose daughter knew the girls' late mother. Horse-loving Bea soon saves a feisty chestnut with colic, forging a unique connection with the horse and alerting Mrs. Scott to their presence. The formidable woman, once a renowned horse trainer, is loath to take on additional dependents, but she keeps the sisters on to work after an accident incapacitates her only stable hand. As Bea endeavors to become indispensable and learns more about the rural community's Depression-era plight, she trains to compete with the difficult horse. Elliott (*Louisa June and the Nazis in the Waves*) nimbly layers historical events—including the devastating effects of the stock market crash and FDR's promise of a "New Deal"—and equine details into an engrossing novel for fans of *The War That Saved My Life*. Protagonists read as white; a secondary character cues as Black. Ages 10–up. *Agent: Katelyn Detweiler, Jill Grinberg Literary Management. (Mar.)*

★ Calling the Moon: 16 Period Stories from BIPOC Authors

Edited by Aida Salazar and Yamile Saied Méndez. Candlewick, $22.99 (368p) ISBN 978-1-5362-1634-9

In this uplifting anthology of stories and poems about menstruation, 16 BIPOC writers, including Saadia Faruqi, Nikki Grimes, Erin Entrada Kelly, Christina Soontornvat, and the volume's editors, share tales that are by turns warm, funny, and empowering. In Leah Henderson's heartfelt "Turning Point," soccer-loving Black tomboy Imari unexpectedly connects with her ballet-loving mother over her first period. "Shiloh: The Gender Creamsicle," a free verse poem by Mason J., follows a brown-skinned nonbinary 11-year-old experiencing belonging at their moon party. Short story standout "Cannibal at the Door," by Elise McMullen-Ciotti, layers the narrative of an 11-year-old reluctantly reconnecting with her mother with the Cherokee story of Stonecoat, a "lonely and hungry" monster made weak by a series of menstruating women. Honest and tender, these works explore themes of grief, friendship, and belonging against varied backdrops and intersectional identities. It's a love letter to all who menstruate, one that's both welcoming and inclusive—particularly to those experiencing their first period. Ages 10–up. *Agents: (for Salazar) Marietta B. Zacker, Gallt & Zacker Literary; (for Saied Méndez) Linda Camacho, Gallt & Zacker Literary. (Mar.)*

In Nightfall

Suzanne Young. Delacorte, $12.99 paper (384p) ISBN 978-0-593-48758-7

Young (the Girls with Sharp Sticks series) spins an ethereal, if predictable, story of romance, strained family relationships, and healing in this darkly paranormal tale. After trashing their father's house while throwing an end-of-the-year rager, Italian and Mexican American–cued teenage siblings Theo and Marco Maggione are sent to spend the summer with their grandmother, Nonna, in Nightfall, Ore. Nightfall, a usually quiet town, is teeming with tourists as residents prepare for the annual Midnight Dive, a festival featuring a late-night mermaid parade during which "everyone walks straight into the ocean." The siblings chafe when Nonna imposes a curfew, especially after effortlessly cool Minnow, a Black local teen, invites them to join her friend group, offering Theo and Marco a welcome respite from dealing with their own mercurial emotions surrounding their parents' recent divorce. Theo soon realizes, however, that something sinister lurks in Nightfall's inky dark depths. Young unevenly touches on themes of violence and female empowerment through varying supernatural tropes. Theo's tongue-in-cheek first-person narration is strongest while navigating mundane troubles such as peer pressure and social isolation, and her evolving relationships with Marco, her parents, and myriad Nightfall residents add emotional heft to this intense thriller. Ages 12–up. *Agent: Lane Heymont, Tobias Literary. (Mar.)*

Made of Stars

Jenna Voris. Viking, $18.99 (368p) ISBN 978-0-593-52521-0

Voris's bustling debut, a Bonnie and Clyde–inspired space pirate exploit, features grim conflict, corrupt politics, and social upheaval steeped in moral complexities. Seventeen-year-old Ava Castor would do anything to escape from what she feels is a dead-end existence living on the planet Nakara. So she joins up with 18-year-old Shane Mannix, a ship-stealing daredevil whose defiance escalates after a stint of harsh imprisonment under the ruling Opian empire. When an operation unveils a secret Opian plot that will devastate Ava and Shane's home world, the duo undertake a series of increasingly violent and risky odd jobs and perilous heists that bring them into repeated confrontation with Opian officials, including Cyrus Blake, an 18-year-old recent flight school graduate who grew up in a financially precarious household. As Shane and Ava continually clash with Cyrus and his peers, Cyrus recognizes unexpected commonalities with the outlaws, forcing him to question his role within the Opian institution. Shane and Ava's mutual desperation to exact revenge for wrongdoings committed against them at any cost exemplifies the narrative's core themes of vengeance and rebellion. Shane is described as having pale skin; Ava is brown-skinned; Cyrus reads as white. Ages 12–up. *Agent: Claire Friedman, InkWell Management. (Mar.)*

Stateless

Elizabeth Wein. Little, Brown, $18.99 (400p) ISBN 978-0-31659-124-9

This suspenseful murder mystery by Wein (*The Enigma Game*), set in 1937, centers a group of stellar young pilots competing in a European air race. Striving to promote peace during a period of international unrest, pioneering British female aviator Lady Firth organizes Europe's First Youth Air Race, comprising 12 pilots aged 17–20 from 12 nations, flying over seven cities. Seventeen-year-old Stella North, Britain's representative and the only female participant, hides her Russian origins, fearing exposure by the press as a stateless refugee. When one pilot disappears before the first leg of the race is completed, Stella believes she witnessed his murder in the sky. Each contestant—and their respective chaperone—is a possible suspect, and Stella, externally cool and collected, privately worries about potential sabotage to her plane. She also wrestles with misgivings about her competitors, each of whom represents a different facet of the imminent war. Danger and intrigue abound in this historically accurate aeronautic adventure, which boasts a large cast whose unusual and dramatically shifting dynamics make for a savory read. Major characters cue as white; one chaperone is a highly regarded Black aviator. A concluding author's note details context regarding pre-WWII and aviation history, plus extensive source notes. Ages 12–up. *Agent: Ginger Clark, Ginger Clark Literary. (Mar.)*

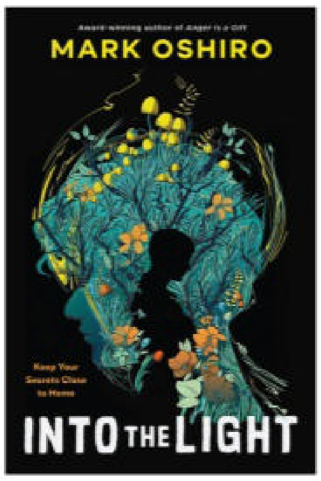
★ Flowerheart

Catherine Bakewell. HarperTeen, $19.99 (352p) ISBN 978-0-06321-459-0

Sixteen-year-old Clara Lucas's innate magic has always been out of control, resulting in overgrown flora and damaged property, but it has never harmed anyone until she accidentally curses her father, whose chest suddenly blooms with poisonous flowers. The only way to cure him is to perform a blessing, a complex spell for which she's never completed training. Desperate to prevent his seemingly inevitable death, she turns to Xavier Morwyn, 16, a childhood friend turned calculating government magician, asking him to help her tame her magic. Though countless mentors have failed to accomplish the task, he agrees—and also offers to remove her wild magic by absorbing it into himself, post-blessing, to give her a chance at a peaceful life. As the pair work together, Clara learns the reason why Xavier pulled away from her all those years ago and uncovers secrets surrounding a mysterious potion cursing the populace. Bakewell (*We Are the Song*) delivers a sensitively cultivated magic system that, as evidenced by the anxiety that makes it difficult for Clara to control her abilities, operates as a commentary on mental illness and its effects on one's ability to move through the world. It's an uplifting and meaningful tale bursting with floral imagery and cottagecore aesthetics. Main characters cue as white. Ages 13–up. *Agent: Jordan Hamessley, New Leaf Literary and Media. (Mar.)*

★ Into the Light

Mark Oshiro. Tor Teen, $19.99 (448p) ISBN 978-1-250-81225-4


Award-winning author of Anger Is a Gift
MARK OSHIRO
Keep Your Secrets Close to Home
INTO THE LIGHT

Via a deliberately plotted, nonlinear timeline, this potent speculative thriller from Oshiro (*Each of Us a Desert*) builds a harrowing image of a queer adoptee navigating religious trauma while combatting white saviorism. Seventeen-year-old Latinx-cued Manny and his older sister Elena don't remember a time when they weren't in foster care, until they are unexpectedly adopted by the white hyper-religious Sullivan family. But for unknown reasons, Manny is immediately sent off to—then subsequently kicked out of—Reconciliation, a religious camp run by a televangelist, and has been hitchhiking through California looking for Elena ever since. He's soon rescued by the Varelas, a nomadic Mexican family comprising kind former pastors Monica and Ricardo and their charming adoptive son Carlos, who reveal that religious trauma impels their own travels. After learning that a body that might be Elena's has been found outside Reconciliation, Manny and the Varelas embark toward the compound. Oshiro persuasively cultivates suspense through Manny's evasive flashbacks to his time back in Reconciliation, interspersed with scenes from the perspective of Eli, another camp participant. While retaining space for authentic representations of faith and spirituality, this breathtaking indictment of corrupted religion's consequences presents a standout, deeply felt portrait of a teenager's longing for connection. Ages 13–up. *Agent: DongWon Song, Howard Morhaim Literary. (Mar.)*

Enter the Body

Joy McCullough. Dutton, $18.99 (336p) ISBN 978-0-5934-0675-5

Focusing primarily on Cordelia, Juliet, and Ophelia, McCullough (*Great or Nothing*) excavates the inner lives of William Shakespeare's most famous tragic heroines in this absorbing experimental novel in verse. Beneath the trap door of a theater, the characters—portrayed as ghosts—share their secrets and traumas with one another while waiting to be resurrected to embody their assigned roles and die on stage each night. The author addresses the absent mothers and lack of education the women faced throughout their lives, as well as their roles as scapegoats for the poor behavior of their stories' male leads, through assorted methods. Wrenching poetic monologues ("Mother found/ less love than I/ in the House of Capulet"), script pages of illuminating dialogue ("I have a question?" Juliet asks Cordelia, who responds, "Oh. We're talking now?"), and prose that briefly foregrounds a larger contemporary world beyond the trap door ("the audience stretches, unwraps candy, checks their phones") provide searing, if occasionally pedantic, commentary on the women's portrayal as docile figures. Via varied signature poetic styles and cadences, such as Cordelia's traditional iambic pentameter and Juliet's short staccato bursts, the women question their desires and sexual identities, and together process their individual traumas. Ages 14–up. *Agent: Jim McCarthy, Dystel, Goderich & Bourret. (Mar.)*

★ I Will Find You Again

Sarah Lyu. Simon & Schuster, $19.99 (304p) ISBN 978-1-5344-6515-2

In this stirring and complex novel by Lyu (*The Best Lies*), 17-year-old high-achieving Chase Ohara, who is Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Taiwanese, wrestles with drug dependency and grief following her ex-girlfriend's death. Chase's seemingly perfect life as cross-country team captain and future valedictorian has felt off-kilter ever since her breakup with her childhood best friend turned girlfriend, 17-year-old Korean adoptee Lia Vestiano. After Chase ignores a text from Lia requesting that Chase meet her in Montauk—where the pair used to go to escape the expectations of their affluent, predominantly white town—and Lia goes missing, Chase's subsequent search for her turns up empty. When authorities discover Lia's body washed ashore in Montauk, they're quick to label it death by suicide, which Chase refuses to accept. Feeling at fault for Lia's death, Chase teams up with the girl Lia was last dating to investigate. Chase is also inadvertently roped into a cheating ring with the classmate who supplies her with an amphetamine that she takes to help maintain her grades. Well-paced nonlinear chapters feature flashbacks to Chase and Lia's tender courtship and its eventual unraveling, offering ardent depictions of mental illness, grief, and the frequent crushing pressure to succeed. Ages 14–up. *Agent: Kerry Sparks, Levine Greenberg Rostan Literary. (Mar.)*

★ Strictly No Heroics

B.L. Radley. Macmillan/Feiwel and Friends, $19.99 (320p) ISBN 978-1-250-81847-8

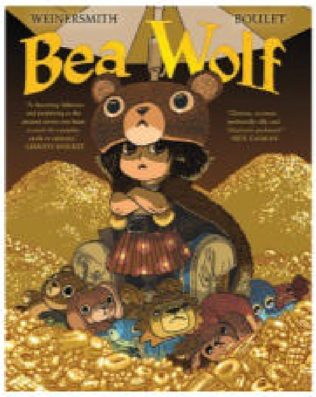
A normal human teenager living in a world where superheroes and villains are standard grapples with high school crushes and a new summer job in this insightful, multilayered debut. Seventeen-year-old Riley Jones, who's struggling to manage her anxiety and figure out how to tell her family she's queer, lives by three simple rules: "Keep your head down. Don't make enemies. Strictly no heroics." But when she's fired from her food service gig for smacking a hero after he sexually harasses her coworker, she gets a job at Hench, a company that supplies supervillains with all-purpose, anonymous hench-people. There, she learns that villainy isn't always about world domination: her coworkers are, like her, just normies trying to make ends meet. Riley's summer grows ever more complicated as the henchmen unionize, land developers look to gentrify her neighborhood, and she develops feelings for her new coworker Sherman, a gorgeous, edgy teen with plenty of attitude and secrets. Radley subverts classic comic book tropes to craft an imaginative futuristic setting grounded in realistic interpersonal challenges. In this engaging and provocative telling, Radley skillfully explores power and privilege from both human and superhuman angles. Characters are intersectionally diverse. Ages 14–up. *(Mar.)*

Comics

★ Bea Wolf

Zach Weinersmith, illus. by Boulet. First Second, $19.99 (208p) ISBN 978-1-250-77629-7

Taking the source material as a starting point, this lovingly crafted retelling sets *Beowulf* among bold suburban children for whom mischief and misbehavior are all. The remix kicks off with an entire chronology of kid-lords, starting with Carl, whose discovery of a golden treasure begins a legendary toy hoard, and continuing down the line to Roger, who establishes a magnificent tree house. Treeheart, as it is known, attracts the wrath of joyless adult Mr. Grindle, whose touch ages kids out of childhood. When Grindle wreaks havoc on Treeheart and adults its inhabitants, mighty five-year-old Bea Wolf, "forged in sparkles and fury," comes to aid Roger and "banish the hall-beast." Leaning into alliteration, wordplay, and imagery-rich kennings, Weinersmith (*Soonish*) creates a joyously lyric, rapid-fire epic that honors the original's intricate linguistic constructions. Close-hatched b&w cartooning from French artist Boulet vividly illuminates the text, presenting in full spreads and paneled vignettes a racially diverse cast



of fierce, distinctively rendered children. It's a truly fresh, inventive remix that privileges childhood's insular sensibilities alongside an unsettling truth: "Time lingers for no kid." Extensive back matter affectionately and accessibly contextualizes *Beowulf*'s history and construction. Ages 8–12. *(Mar.)*

Hoops

Matt Tavares. Candlewick, $22.99 (224p)
ISBN 978-1-5362-0136-9; $12.99 paper
ISBN 978-1-5362-3195-3

Set in the 1970s after the minting of Title IX, this feminist graphic novel, inspired by Indiana basketball player Judi Warren, follows fictional high schooler Judi Wilson, who dreams of scoring the winning basket during a championship game. But there are no girls' athletics teams at Judi's high school, so she sets aside her court desires to become a cheerleader. When her school starts a girls' basketball team, dubbed the Lady Bears, she's overjoyed to play, but her team faces many challenges, including being required to practice at the elementary school and make their own jerseys. Teammate Lisa points out that the boys' team suffers none of these indignities, and, together with Judi and another teammate, speaks out. The athletic director tells them, "When you can fill the gym, you can share it" with the boys' team. Determined to prove themselves, the girls slowly build a winning streak, setting themselves up for success despite their disadvantages. Set against snowy, ambient Midwestern backgrounds peopled by friendly faced characters portrayed with varying skin tones, Tavares (*Dasher*) gently relays lessons about equality and activism alongside themes of friendship and fitting in, offering an approachable, motivational entry point into Title IX's effect on sports history. Ages 8–12. *(Mar.)*

★ Meesh the Bad Demon (Meesh the Bad Demon #1)

Michelle Lam. Knopf, $21.99 (304p)
ISBN 978-0-593-37287-6; $13.99 paper
ISBN 978-0-593-37286-9

In this touching graphic novel debut, Lam subverts well-worn fantasy tropes to craft an inaugural adventure that empathetically addresses themes of acceptance and friendship. Tween demon Meesh lives in the fiery depths of "Mount Magma: Home of the Demons, Land of the Lava," where she is often bullied by her fire-breathing, acid-puking classmates for her love of all things pink and sparkly. Raised by her lava factory worker grandmother, Meesh aspires to be just like her idol, tween fairy Princess Nouna of Plumeria, a reality TV sensation. After an unexplained incident turns all Mount Magma denizens, save Meesh, to stone, Meesh seeks help from the Plumerian fairies to restore her world, finding that what she encounters in Plumeria is vastly different from what she anticipated. Adorably designed characters sporting animated expressions populate imaginative landscapes rendered in ominous dark purples and reds and otherworldly pastel pinks and yellows. Indulging in familiar archetypes, Lam thoughtfully addresses the central conflicts—which examine demons vs. fairies and expectations vs. reality—via conversational dialogue and tenderly developing friendships, making for an accessible morality tale and a not-to-be-missed romp. Ages 8–12. *Agent: Chelsea Eberly, Greenhouse Literary. (Mar.)*

The Snowcat Prince

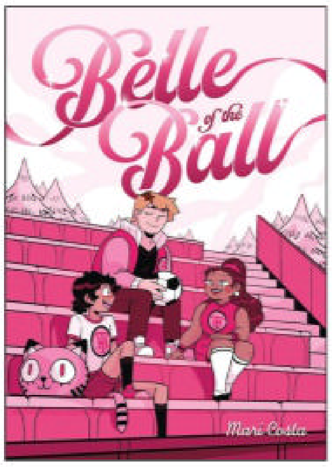
Dina Norlund. Oni, $14.99 paper (176p)
ISBN 978-1-63715-198-3

A magical kingdom, feuding mythical creatures, and a treacherous quest for power frame this expansive graphic novel adventure. According to legend, the leader of the Snowcats, the Eldking—an icy blue feline entity with elk horns—once ruled over the Nordan Kingdom. Wanting his power for themselves, red serpentine monsters with vulpine heads called Sandfoxes stole the Eldking's crown and disappeared. The youngest of seven Snowcat princes, Syv—whose late father often regaled him with these tales of old—is determined to reclaim the stolen crown from the malicious Sandfoxes, especially after his brothers claim to have found a map to it in their father's belongings. Syv sets out alone until he befriends Kit, a rambunctious freckled human wearing a crown of twigs upon flaming red hair. As the pair travel across the land, through snow-covered hills and into eerie, sunset-hued forests, Syv must confront hard truths about his people's past if he hopes to return home alive. Norwegian artist Norlund cleverly utilizes highly saturated contrasting color palettes to emphasize the mystical species' ancient feud. Boasting a vivid sense of place and a tranquil ambiance, this contemplative story explores preconceived notions and the import of generational storytelling. Ages 8–12. *(Mar.)*

★ Belle of the Ball

Mari Costa. First Second, $24.99 (320p)
ISBN 978-1-250-78413-1; $17.99 paper
ISBN 978-1-250-78412-4

Though painfully shy high school senior and athletic mascot B. Hawkins tends to hide inside her costume's large feline head, she's finally worked up the courage to ask out head cheerleader Regina Moreno. The good news is that Regina thinks Hawkins is adorable; the bad news is that Regina recently got back together with her on-again, off-again girlfriend, star athlete Chloe Kitagawa. Worried that Chloe's poor grades will jeopardize her 10-year plan, Regina leverages Hawkins's infatuation to persuade her to tutor Chloe for free. Hawkins hesitantly agrees, but an initial tutoring session gets off to a rough start when Chloe realizes that Hawkins is actually a childhood friend and former crush, prompting unexpected romantic feelings to resurface. Thin b&w lines coupled with vividly saturated pink hues imbue this energetic graphic novel rom-com with a cotton-candy atmosphere that expertly conveys the trials and tribulations of first love. Costa (*Life of Melody*) smartly employs classic shojo manga aesthetics, well-timed comedic beats, and winningly characterized protagonists to deliver a refreshing spin on the love triangle trope that meditatively interrogates identity. Hawkins is white and Jewish; Regina is Brazilian; Chloe cues as East Asian. Ages 14–up. *Agent: Peter Ryan, Stimola Literary Studio. (Mar.)* ■



BookLife Reviews

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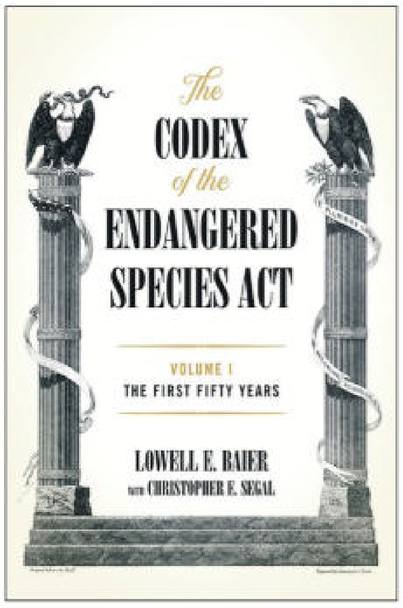
POLITICAL & SOCIAL SCIENCES

⚡EDITOR'S PICK

The Codex of the Endangered Species Act, Vol. 1: The First Fifty Years



Lowell E. Baier | Rowman & Littlefield

797p, hardcover, $99, ISBN 978-1-538-11207-6

"If the reason of 'why' we protect endangered species was so obvious 50 years ago, and to scientists past and present, why then has the Endangered Species Act become so reviled and conflicted?" asks Baier at the start of this revelatory volume, an invaluable one-tome-history answering just that. Baier covers how the ESA was conceived and enacted, how it's been enforced and contested over a half century, how in the name of biodiversity it challenges other fundamental American rights, and how it might be improved upon. Protecting that act is "our charge to keep," Baier argues. The bulk of this exhaustive study, though, lays out how the ESA came to exist and the ceaseless wrangling over its implementation.

Baier offers thorough, richly illustrated accounts of crises of conservation throughout American history, and up-close surveys of what it took to get the law passed, implemented, and amended. Original interviews supplement a wealth of sources as Baier pays welcome attention to the shifting cultural and political contexts.

Baier's history will appeal to readers of environmental and policy history, of course, but its sweep, depth, authority, clarity, and engaging prose mean it should likewise command the attention of anyone eager to understand America itself, especially the question of what the nation values. Case studies and a federalist "road map" for the future—"smaller stick, a larger carrot, and a more balanced endangered species program"—are as illuminating as the narrative history.

The urgent, revelatory history and possible future of the Endangered Species act.

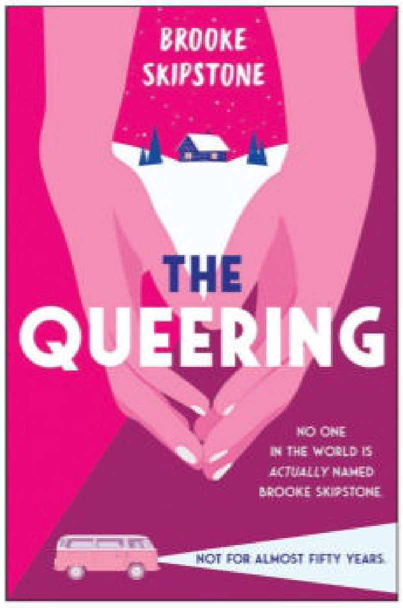
Great for fans of Brian Czech and Paul R. Krausman's *The Endangered Species Act.*

PRODUCTION GRADES:
Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

YOUNG ADULT

⚡EDITOR'S PICK

The Queering



Brooke Skipstone | **PSkipstone** Publishing

308p, e-book, $2.99, ASIN B0BJJ4LNPD

Skipstone follows up titles like *Crystal's House of Queers* with an emotionally thrilling romance roller coaster of love lost, new relationships found, and what it costs to live your truth, all set in conservative Alaska. Taylor Baird MacKenzie is a 70-year-old grandma and secret queer romance author who is ready to venture into the world as her true self, a queer, lesbian woman. With a plan set in motion, Taylor faces her fate as events unfold between her convicted murderer brother, her self-centered husband, and her new-found friends. Most promisingly, Taylor meets a widow with whom connection is so immediate that Taylor is surprised, at first meeting, to notice a handshake has briefly turned into hand-holding.

With an urgent narrative that seamlessly transitions between past and present, and two strong protagonists, Skipstone weaves a relevant and exciting story for all audiences. The commentary on the ramifications of criminalizing being gay, lesbian, or anyone who doesn't fit within cis-gender society makes *The Queering* captivating from beginning to end. Taylor's experiences offer a welcome reminder that people like her have too long been forced to live in the shadows, facing danger, heartbreak, and judgment if they let the truth out.

A fast-paced yet thoughtful romance of coming out and finding love in later life in Alaska.

Taylor faces all of that, of course, striving for acceptance in a small town. She's a deep character with relatable anxieties and feelings, making the novel's well-earned ending especially satisfying. Skipstone's handling of gender, sexual preference, and love in later life is thoughtful and refreshing, making this this a rousing must-read.

Great for fans of Casey McQuiston's *Red, White and Royal Blue*, Meryl Wilsner's *Something to Talk About.*

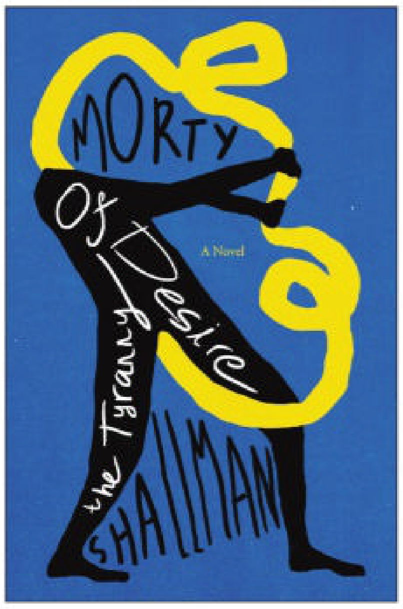
PRODUCTION GRADES:
Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

booklife REVIEWS

FICTION

The Tyranny of Desire

Morty Shallman | Flying Red Books
212p, hardcover, $24.99, ISBN 979-8-986-35480-4



Puchy Mushkin, the hero of this ribald and incisive provocation from author/musician Shallman, has a problem: his overwhelming desire can only be matched by his enormous penis. Being endowed with that "Rubirosan love muscle," it turns out, is "a double-edge sword." Believing that all his many travails—among them a failed marriage, an ex-lover who literally crucifies him, and his recent exile from polite society—stem from his unquenchable hedonism, Puchy vows to start living life devoid of want, believing, "...desire is a dangerous thing. The source of all suffering and pain." This seemingly noble pursuit backfires for Puchy, though Shallman has a ball conjuring up the wildest situations and transgressions in a carnivalesque Los Angeles, including a mayoral campaign, an odd irredeemable love, and involvement with a woman who sells her feces to the highest bidder.

The story may sound at first blush like the world's biggest penis joke, but readers who relish irreverent literary play will be rewarded with insight and challenges to convention, especially when Puchy falls into his more introspective moments. By trying to live for want of nothing, Puchy finds out that being the anti-yes-man also has its cons. From one extreme to another, the fine line between being in control and being controlled sends Puchy into a host of extreme—and often uproarious—setpieces in the spirit of the norm-shattering, can-you-top-this? sexually frank comic novels of a generation ago, with a welcome queer edge.

Jolts of such wisdom offer relief from the darkness and depravity. Much of the humor stems from politically incorrect characters, most of whom reveal surprising depths in what at first might seem the shallow swamps of their personas. Still, the comedy is proudly over-the-top, edging toward bawdy vaudeville, destructive not just of "decency" but niceties like narrative momentum and clarity. Puchy's just too much for this world.

The riotously bawdy story of a man finding it harder than it looks to live without a care.

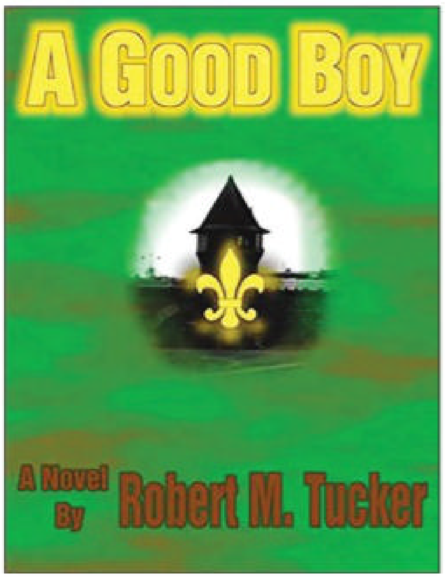
Great for fans of Arthur Nersesian, Gary Reilly's *The Asphalt Warrior.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A-**

FICTION

A Good Boy

Robert M. Tucker
584p, e-book, $9.99, ASIN B01AONN9AU



This provocative novel from Tucker (*Byron*, among other titles) examines, through the story of two young men and their intertwined lives, what it takes to be what the title promises. Set in mid-century California suburbia, *A Good Boy* finds Tom Jensen and John Brinkhoff starting life in differing ways in the same town, then following them from embattled foes, to unexpected friends, and ultimately into something more complex, their encounters tense, troubling, and disruptive. Charismatic Tom, a wild and unconforming product of divorce, grasps for an understanding of his roots and finding his identity. John, a Boy Scout with a strong moral compass and stronger work ethic, has a proscribed path on the straight and narrow, though his respectability's challenged when Tom's life crashes into his.

Blending suspense with telling character portraiture and a strong sense of how people grow into themselves, the novel opens with Tom, after years in jail, aiming for nothing less "to destroy meaning for [John Birkoff] just as Birkhoff, by a single act had destroyed meaning for" him. Tucker offers a gritty, persuasive account of the terrors of life behind the bars, and skillfully lays bare both characters' perspectives, revealing, in tense scenes, why Tom blames John—and all that middle-class John has to lose. The mens' future is as complex as their pasts, especially as Tom falls in with a militarized Christian cult.

As the story builds toward inevitable violence, Tucker weaves these lives together in surprising, suspenseful ways, with failures of empathy reverberating across years. The novel abounds in striking and clever parallels—a parole hearing echoing an appearance before the Eagle Scouts' Board of Review is ironic without being cute. Whether this pained dyad is doomed to tragedy will keep readers of character-driven literary fiction engaged, especially as Tucker challenges assumptions of what a "Good Boy" even means.

The suspenseful, character-rich story of a convict's life entwining with a respected man's.

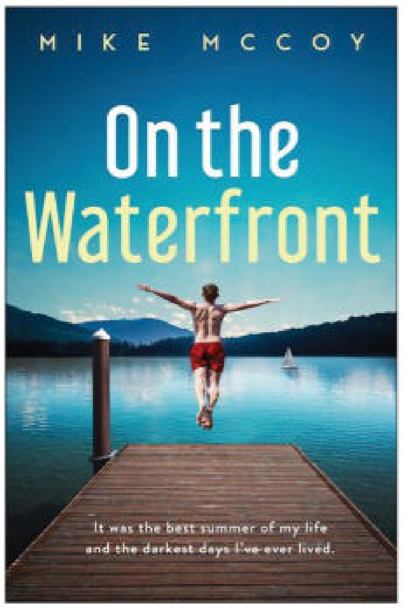
Great for fans of
Thomas Berger's *Neighbors*, T.C. Boyle's *When the Killing's Done.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **C+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

FICTION

On the Waterfront

Mike McCoy | BlasterTech
103p, e-book, $2.99, ISBN 978-1-736-60215-7


MIKE MCCOY
On the Waterfront
It was the best summer of my life and the darkest days I've ever lived.

McCoy (*Bridge to Nowhere*) spins a coming-of-age tale set in the Oregon woods as 13-year-old Danny Novak tries to navigate his summer Boy Scout camp job. Struggling with a tumultuous home life thanks to a divorce and his mom's problems with men, Danny can't wait to get out for the summer, and despite his young age and inexperience, he sets out to make a place for himself working in the kitchen at Camp Baker. His plan doesn't quite come together as he expected, however: the other camp workers bully him, his cabin mate's on his case as soon as he walks through the door, and the resident troublemaker, Mark, has Danny in his sights after being assigned to teach him how to swim.

McCoy writes with passion, illuminating the angst of young males trying to find their footing, and his characters are as believable as they are entertaining. Danny is a classic kid on the cusp of adolescence, gangly and awkward and never quite sure how to fit in—or if he really wants to. Just as in life, the other boys initiate him into young adulthood early on, or at least what they think is adulthood, with sex talk and tales of adolescent bravado. While Danny's metamorphosis is slow to start, it takes off once he's thrown in with Mark, a misunderstood "juvenile delinquent" who's just trying to outrun his past.

Their dynamic is sharply observed: the two tread carefully around each other in the beginning, but soon they discover something deeper lurking under the surface, and they teeter on the edge of that revelation until the book's jolt of an ending. That conclusion invites picking back through the novel, reading again in a new light, but the book's heart isn't just in its surprise. McCoy evokes those muggy summer nights of cricket chirping and self-discovery that will resonate with readers of character-driven literary fiction.

A surprising summer camp tale of unlikely friendships and young adulthood.

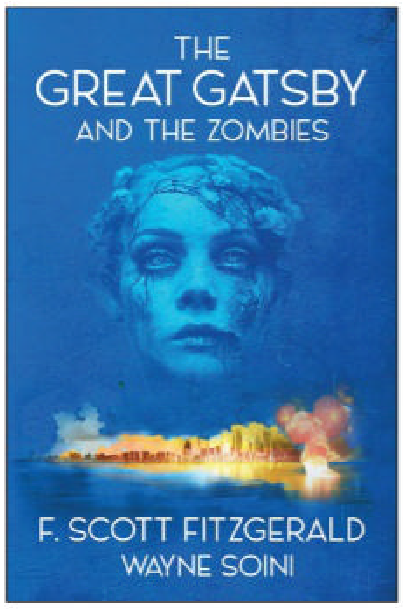
Great for fans of Will Hobbs's *Downriver*, Pete Hautman's *OtherWood.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **B** | Marketing copy: **A-**

FICTION

The Great Gatsby and the Zombies

F. Scott Fitzgerald and Wayne Soini
219p, mass market, $14.99, ASIN B0BL834L2L



"Forgive me at this point for diverting, as all of our attentions have been diverted of late, to the brain eaters," Nick Caraway pleads to readers early in this zombified version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's epochal novel of glitz and disillusionment. Inspired by the likes of 2009's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, which kicked off a spate of prankish revisions of classic literature to include horror elements, Soini (author of *Gloucester's Sea Serpent*) brings the conceit into the modernist era, on the occasion of Fitzgerald's 1925 masterpiece entering the public domain. Significant portions of the original text still appear—the green light on Daisy's dock continues to transfix, and the novel still peaks with that climactic glimpse of "a fresh, green breast of the new world."

But it's transmogrified by Soini's inventions, chief among them what President Coolidge called the "disruptive interruption" period—a war with "Homo Zombiti" and its aftermath. A laugh-out-loud scene imagines a delegation of zombies signing a peace treaty; here, it's this conflict that has shattered a generation, rather than the First World War. Soini's prose can't quite measure up to the jeweled romance of Fitzgerald's, but it's strong, and he's more generous and successful in his additions than the authors of some works in this curious genre. An encounter with Groucho Marx at a Gatsby party is a delight, and jokes about the Cubs and talkies, plus cameos from luminaries like Maxwell Perkins all contribute to the sense of play.

Gatsby remains a tragedy, albeit one whose Jazz Age highs allow room for fun. Soini, thankfully, has thought through that tragedy, taking it seriously as he springs undead surprises. Soini's additions aren't just clever—as Carraway likens that lonely ol' sport Gatsby to "a sort of zombie outside of his horde," they have weight.

The undead roam Fitzgerald's classic, but the story still has weight.

Great for fans of Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Sherri Browning Erwin's *Jane Slayre*.

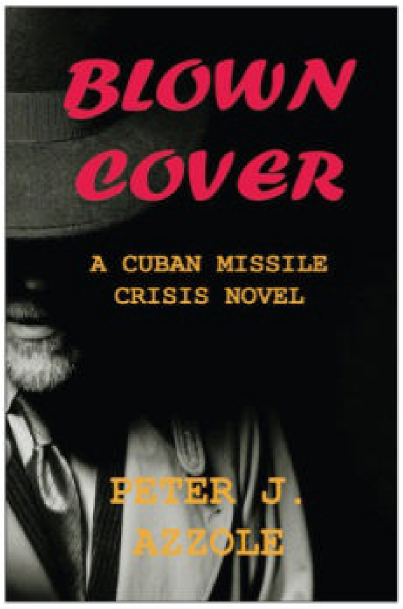
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography:A | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

FICTION

Blown Cover: A Cuban Missle Crisis Novel

Peter J. Azzole

175p, trade paper, $13.99, ISBN 979-8-352-37729-1



Azzole (*Assignment: Normandy*) shifts from the battlefields of WWII that served as the setting of his Tony Romella USN WWII Series to another arena of a great global conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis. When Communications Technician Salvador Conte, a 27-year-old Navy linguist, is summoned to an unusual interview in the Naval Security Group Activity Operations Building, he assumes it's about his request to train to join the recently created Seals. But it's July 1962, and the thirst for insight into the Soviet's plans demands focused intelligence collection on Cuba. Salvador's recruited to go undercover, as he's got a Cuban mother, language skills, and no classified knowledge that would be compromised if anything goes wrong. As the title suggests, his undercover mission, Operation Cymbal Beat, to go undercover on the island isn't likely to go smoothly.

Azzole, a retired Navy officer, again demonstrates meticulous attention to detail, tradecraft, and the military mind, lending welcome realism to the story. Azzole persuasively ties his invented character to actual events, which he lays out with methodical and impressive precision. For all its ticking-clock suspense, *Blown Clover* bursts with technical information, supplemented by instructive photographs. Readers fascinated by the nuts-and-bolts of mid-century espionage and military planning and hardware will relish Azzole's authoritative accounts, though the emphasis on detail comes at times at the expense of momentum.

Azzole's life experience is also felt in the highly plausible mission he assigns to Salvador. Unlike many Cold War spy thrillers, Salvador isn't some slick secret agent on a glamorous mission. Instead, Azzole presents his readers with a realistic endeavor that captures such work's nerve-racking mixture of grind and intense danger. With its focus on realism and information Azzole's enthusiastic story is a true to life espionage novel.

This detailed, highly realistic spy story will thrill lovers of actual Cold War espionage.

Great for fans of

Stephen L. Carter's *Back Channel*, Moisés Naím's *Two Spies in Caracas.*

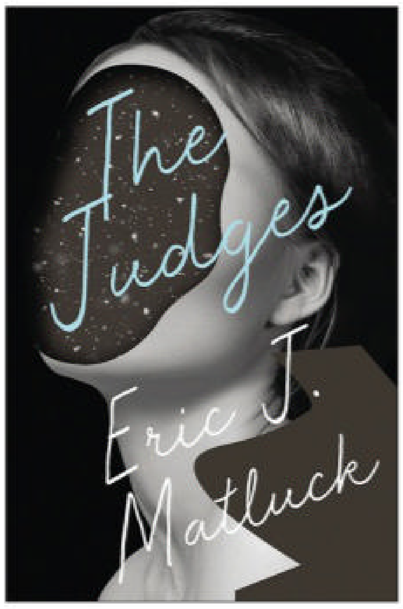
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A-**

FICTION

The Judges

Eric J. Matluck | Next Exit Press

226p, e-book, $22.95, ISBN 979-8-986-42530-6



This bold psychological novel from Matluck (*Notes for a Eulogy*) gets under the skin of Mary Sorabi, a classical pianist and recent winner of the Graffman International Piano Competition. To all her friends, she seems like she's about to be the next big thing in the music world. Instead of pondering her upcoming recital, though, Mary's pondering the three faceless beings who appeared on her couch one evening. Calling themselves The Judges, they delve into Mary's daily life decisions, big and small, weighing them out, complete with slide projector, all for some unknown grander purpose. Their faceless natures belie their thoughts on justice: "Justice shouldn't be wearing a blindfold," one intones, adding " she should be wearing a mask, because justice is inscrutable."

That's the enticing setup of *The Judges*, a clever and incisive story that focuses heavily on Mary's internal dialogue, inviting readers to come to know every little thought—and her own judgements on everything and everyone around her. From her deliberating the appropriate tip for a waiter who offers her free food to her considering how to handle her boundaries with a verbally abusive older brother, Matluck lays bare this engaging character's complex everyday decision-making process, pointing the way for readers to ponder in their own lives.

Are the judges a manifestation of her inner doubts, some beyond-the-human tribunal, or something stranger still? Those questions fascinate, but Matluck's interest is in Mary and her mind as she navigates the world. At times densely thoughtful, the novel probes why we make the decisions that we do, the storytelling laser-pointed focus on Mary's inner turmoil, her rationalizations and running monologues. Matluck explores rich questions but leaves much to readers to answer, guided by insights like "big decisions were nothing but a lot of small decisions piled on top of one another."

A surprising novel of a pianist's mind, a mysterious tribunal, and the ethics of everyday choices.

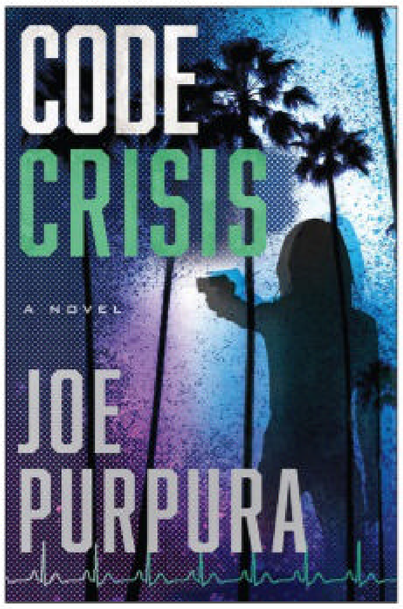
Great for fans of

Nicholson Baker, Michael Poore's *Reincarnation Blues.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **B**

Code Crisis

Joe Purpura | Greenleaf Book Group Press
360p, hardcover, $27.95, ISBN 979-8-886-45013-2



Blending the thriller genre with a welcome sense of everyday reality and a splash of romance, the debut from Purpura, an obstetrician-gynecologist, creates verisimilitude by drawing on a world he knows well to ground a tense, twisty, high-stakes adventure. The charming Dr. Vince DeLuca, a gynecologist at the Santa Barbara Community Hospital, is smart and snarky, and knows his way around the hospital. But when one of his patients hands him the name and number of a mysterious arms dealer, Vince is thrown into a world of missiles, arms, and terror attacks. And at the center of it all is Carolyn, a drop-dead gorgeous CIA agent who threatens to topple his entire world. Will Vince survive this foray into uncharted territory?

Right off the bat, Purpura sets the scene of a typical day at the hospital, and establishes, with telling detail and crisp prose, the dynamics of its various constituents, from doctors to nurses to patients. But within the first few pages, the story shifts from what seems a typical hospital drama, to something more thrilling. The medical material is convincing, of course, but Purpura's descriptions of the tradework, attitudes, and shoptalk of the CIA, FBI, and international outfits like Al Qaeda also ring true, suggesting a gritty, messy reality.

That verisimilitude helps sell some plot twists that might strain credulity, especially when several come in quick succession, not always leaving readers time to recover from one jolt before the next. Still, Purpura's inviting voice, witty characters, persuasive milieu, and fast-moving—even hurtling—plot ensure readers are hooked till the very end. *Code Crisis* is often funny, even charming, with asides about the misery of cooking for one or the possibility that the government "must have some hidden kick-ass woman factory near Quantico and Langley." That doesn't slow the action or suspense, though. Lovers of fast-paced thrillers will look forward to more from Purpura.

This action-packed thriller debut pits a doctor and a CIA agent against a terrorist plot.

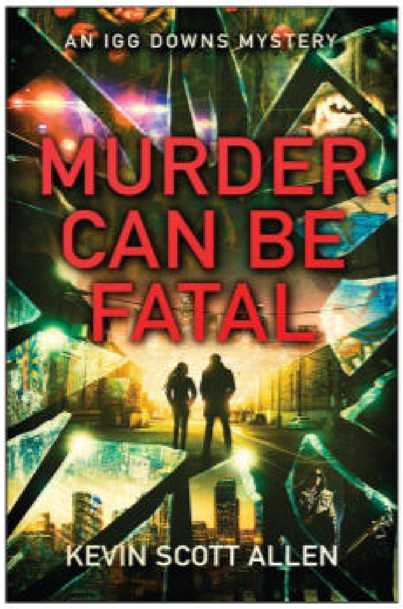
Great for fans of Daniel Kalla, Peter Palmieri's *Blood Moon.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A-**

MYSTERY/THRILLER

Murder Can Be Fatal: An Igg Downs Mystery

Kevin Scott Allen | Film Arts Press
319p, e-book, $5.99, ISBN 978-0-997-00941-5



In this series-starter, down-on-his-luck PI Igg Downs, stuck in a grim section of Los Angeles, is trying to dig his way out of a pile of trouble: his landlady has died, leaving everything to her vicious dog, making Downs his caretaker. But the landlady's great-nephew is trying to evict him anyway, and he's up against brutal cop Jake, who has never forgiven Downs for sleeping with his wife. In the middle of all this, teenage Frankie, on parole from gang activities, tries to engage Downs to find her missing uncle. Her plight pierces his cynical attitude, and they form an uneasy partnership. Downs pulls himself together to help Frankie—and perhaps to achieve redemption.

Allen has a gift for characterizations, and best of all is Downs, who narrates the story in a sardonic first person, admits to clumsiness and knows when he's outmatched. He's generally pessimistic, but he shows he's not as hard-bitten as he pretends: "People and their feelings were messy. That is why I avoided both religiously." Allen also does a wonderful job with the semi-adult Frankie. Downs sees this right away, and their relationship—prickly at first—comes across as warm and real. Even minor characters come to life in vibrant detail, such as Mamacita, for whom hot peppers solve all problems. The noirish, sometimes playful Raymond Chandler patter is often polished and memorable, though at times it comes on thick, and the plot gets convoluted, but the engaging cast and steady surprises nimbly carry the story.

Allen gets full marks for showing the part of Los Angeles that isn't Hollywood, where the gangs rule. We see Frankie's dilapidated neighborhood, whose downtrodden residents make attempts to beautify it. In the end, Downs navigates through the neighborhood and its denizens to an ending that is both shocking and satisfying, leaving readers to hope for a sequel.

A down-on-his-luck PI finds that a scrappy teen may be his ticket to redemption.

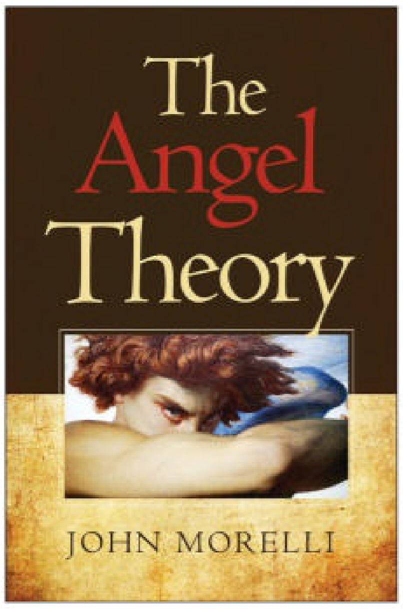
Great for fans of Robert B. Parker's *Night Passage*, Benjamin Black's *The Silver Swan.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **B+** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **B+**

SF/FANTASY/HORROR

The Angel Theory

John Morelli | Oaklea Publishing
390p, mass market, $16.95, ISBN 979-8-846-87159-5



The Angel Theory, the twisty, consistently surprising fiction debut of judge and trial attorney Morelli, concerns a fall from grace, yes, but the questions that the book plumbs firmly concern this material world, with one small science-fiction twist. At age 55, "disgusted and depressed" with the law, one-man-shop attorney Bill Arena connects with Peter Swanteck, an old friend from Little League and now a physicist who has become the laughing stock after publishing an article arguing that time travel isn't just theoretically possible—it's achievable now. Soon, Arena is impressed into overseeing Swanteck's early—and surprisingly successful—time-travel experiments, eventually agreeing to serve as executor of Swanteck's will and estate should anything go wrong.

Something does go wrong, of course. But, fascinatingly, something also seems to go right, as Arena discovers himself suddenly, impossibly rich, in a *Great Expectations*-style windfall that will keep readers guessing. An uncle's long-ago investment in a now dominant computer company lifts Arena and family to a California mansion, A-list Hollywood parties—and all the temptations and legal hassles that come with it. Morelli continually throws off expectations, offering a vividly detailed moral and legal thriller with literary characterization and pacing rather than the time-travel shenanigans readers might expect.

Arena asks his friends, early on, who they could murder, via time travel, to better the world, but, as Morelli makes clear throughout, cause and effect are more complex than that fantasy. The question becomes, for Arena, whether or not to destroy Swanteck's discoveries. The story hits some traditional suspense beats, but what's most engaging are the legal travails of the newly rich Arena, which find him representing himself in a suit filed by a Swanteck relation. Morelli writes with persuasive power and an eye for telling detail for the legal and financial realms, and his story engages as both what-if? and moral conundrum.

Time travel upends a lawyer's life in this thoughtful, convincing literary thriller.

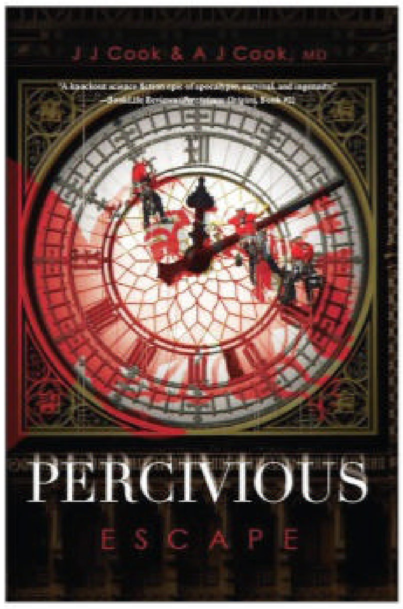
Great for fans of Reed Arvin's *The Will*, Paul Goldstein's *Errors and Omissions.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A-**

SF/FANTASY/HORROR

Percivious Escape

JJ Cook and AJ Cook | AJ JJ Publishing
274p, e-book, $2.99, ISBN 978-1-777-37749-6



The Cooks conclude their near-future Percivious trilogy with an epic collaboration between species. Eight years after Covid-19 was contained, another pandemic mysteriously emerges—chronic insomnia that's debilitating the world's population, leading to fatal accidents on a massive scale. Proteus, a pharmaceutical company, is making billions with the wonder drug Noctural, but drug developer Cooper Delaney knows it doesn't work. The sociopath Khalid Al Gamdi uses his immense wealth to kidnap Cooper and other scientists and force them to find a real cure that Khalid can use to control the world.

The Cook husband and wife writing team plows right into the plot of the third book, which follows the second book's off-planet adventure with the XYZ, Earth's original intelligent race evolved from whales hundreds of millions of years ago and then returned to Earth from an aborted colonization attempt on another planet. The XYZ's belief in *percivious*, or altruism, compels them to help save humanity. The story and ideas are complex—new readers should start with the first book, and even seasoned fans may find it challenging, at times, to keep up as the XYZ, whose enormous HELIX spaceship hides on the far side of the moon, send representative Herriden to Earth. But Herriden's mission is threatened when the HELIX is discovered and under attack.

A flurry of characters introduced well into the book distract from an unfolding, multifaceted plot that touches on fascinating conspiracies and Human Pinnacle Theory, the idea that humans have reached an evolutionary pinnacle, unable to further adapt. Nevertheless, these threads eventually tie together, and patient fans of ambitious SF will enjoy a satisfying conclusion that celebrates altruism and teamwork. Readers will savor the uplifting conclusion to an ambitious saga.

Lovers of intricate SF will enjoy this finale that finds Earth's two intelligenct species teaming up.

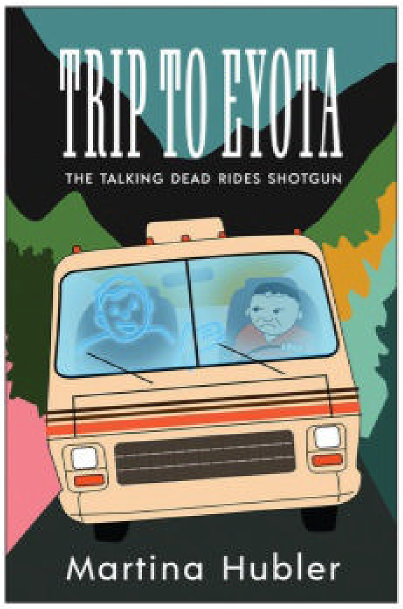
Great for fans of Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*, Alechia Dow's *The Sound of Stars.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

SF/FANTASY/HORROR

Trip to Eyota: The Talking Dead Rides Shotgun

Martina Hubler | ProductPublisher
274p, trade paper, $14.99, ISBN 979-8-985-60340-8



Hubler (*Hilda Heeks, Ghost Hunter*) offers a colorful buddy comedy of a ghost and a traveling salesman in a story about life choices and unlikely friendships. Exhausted fertilizer salesman Ray Heeks is in Georgia for a presentation tomorrow and takes the last hotel room available, where the TV turns itself on and off and Ray hears voices in the empty room. Soon Ray is face to face with Augustus "Gus" Larson, a naked man who appears "to be made from plastic wrap" enthusiastically pressing the TV remote. Gus died in the shower during the first Bush administration, wasn't ready to go toward the light, and has been trapped in the room ever since. Ray helps Gus be able to leave the room, which is just in time, because persistent Peaches Poindexter, the Poltergeist Pulminator ghost hunter, is on their tails, forcing the duo into an improbable road trip.

With a playful yet swift pace, Hubler packs on the humor and daft gags (a manual titled *How to be a Success in the Spirit World and on Wall Street*, the possibility that ghosts are "like the hobos who'd mark the fence posts of homes with kindly housewives") as the woefully unprepared travelers wing it. Gus wants Ray to take him home to see his sister and best friend in Minnesota, but first Ray— "the ringmaster of this circus"—needs to confront his effusive wife Hilda who thinks he's having an affair with Peaches. A comedy of errors ensues, involving a jalopy RV and a surprising hitchhiker, the ghostly fire-and-brimstone Most Reverend Silas Simon Barnet.

Readers who like spirited, feel-good adventure will happily cheer on the frazzled but resourceful salesman and his loquacious ghostly pal who has a penchant for roadside diners even though he can't eat. Sharp prose, an ear for comic dialogue, and on-the-road detail ground the silliness. This charming comedy is perfect for a beach or vacation read.

This spirited buddy comedy with a heart is a ghostly road trip that leaves readers smiling.

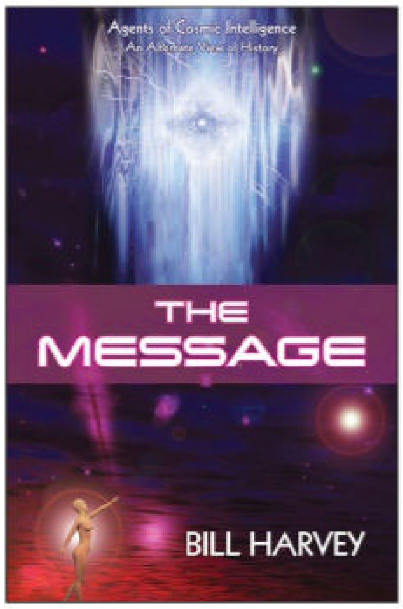
Great for fans of S.G. Tasz's *Welcome to Halcyon*, Jack Townsend's *Tales from the Gas Station.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

SF/FANTASY/HORROR

The Message: Agents of Cosmic Intelligence

Bill Harvey | The Human Effectiveness Institute
212p, trade paper, $14.99, ISBN 978-0-918-53817-8



Harvey (author of *Pandemonium*, among other titles) continues his epic-scoped Agents of Cosmic Intelligence series with this globe-crossing thriller of expanded consciousness, centered on military officer Martin Williams—a man given to precognitive hunches—and the new U.S. Theta Force team, created by President Gomez as an answer to Russia's "Psychotronic Division." Williams, perhaps acting on a hunch, turns down an offer to run Theta Force, instead serving as its executive officer in charge of training and security. The story this time turns on a surprise transmission of uncertain origin received by all of Earth's psychics: an androgynous voice saying, among other things, "Each of us is God."

The bold novel that follows teases apart the spiritual, philosophical, and practical truths and implications of that message and its sender in a series of brisk yet thoughtful scenes among a diverse cast of characters. As before, Harvey is engaged with the everyday life of psychics in thriller scenarios, penning crisp, engaging dialogue and a host of surprising scenarios. At the same time, Harvey takes wild narrative risks—after much talk of UFOs and alien intelligence, the startling giant figure who eventually confronts a tech billionaire is not something readers will see coming.

That scene's a doozy, and Harvey's inventiveness extends to cosmic alt-history, millennia-spanning conspiracies, futurology, untapped human potential, memorable tech-thriller action, and more. But it's the ideas that drive this series. "Your species seems to have a death wish," one mysterious personage tells a young Lama, which gets to the core of these books: Harvey spins a secret history of all of us, urging us to be more. (The novels are published out of narrative order and can be read independently of each other, though their connections are rewarding.)

This bold, brisk conspiratorial psychic thriller series imagines humanity's secret history.

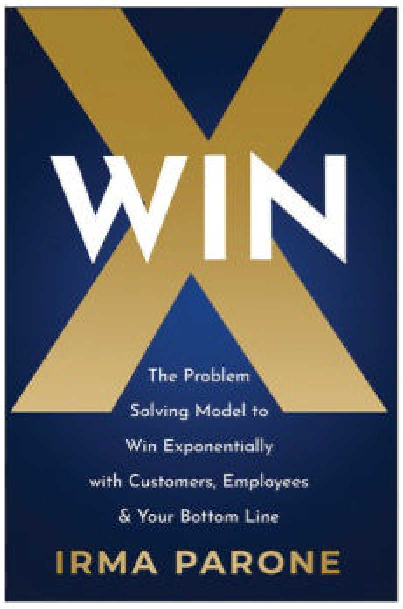
Great for fans of Lindsay Ellis's *Axiom's End*, Michael Flynn's *Eifelheim.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

booklife REVIEWS

BUSINESS & PERSONAL FINANCE

WINX: The Problem Solving Model to Win Exponentially with Customers, Employees & Your Bottom Line



Irma Parone | WINX Publishing
169p, e-book, $3.99, ISBN 979-8-986-19691-6

"WINX is a proven 8-step process that anyone, of any age, experience level, industry, or profession can learn and use," Parone writes in this inviting, to-the-point guide to problem-solving and decision-making in business. WINX, which comes from the phrase "winning exponentially," shares her original, adaptable framework for arriving at and implementing decisions, suited for both small businesses and larger companies. One key element setting Parone's framework apart: her acknowledgement that decision-making is not an exact science, and that emotion always plays a part. She urges readers to recognize and account for that truth.

Better results, of course, is the point. Parone makes her case with telling examples from her own experience, case studies of companies making good and bad—and often emotional—decisions, plus persuasive data and research. *WINX* demonstrates the urgency of arriving at well-rounded decisions to achieve the "defined win"s crucial to growing and protecting successful businesses and building better business practices and cultures. Enter the eight steps of WINX, a practical tool that can be put into action as-is or amended to fit individual needs.

WINX breaks down the steps ("Craft Your problem Statement," "Evaluate Alternatives") with clear, easy-to-grasp guidance and explanations. Parone lays bare how to look at a problem from different angles and—crucially—set a "powerful intention" that best serves "the customer, the company, and the employees." Parone emphasizes that while there is no 100% guaranteed method to eliminate errors or bad decisions, the WINX method will help to ensure winning, rational decisions more times than not. This book is a helpful resource for entrepreneurs, business leaders, and anyone facing tough choices that will have an impact on a variety of stakeholders.

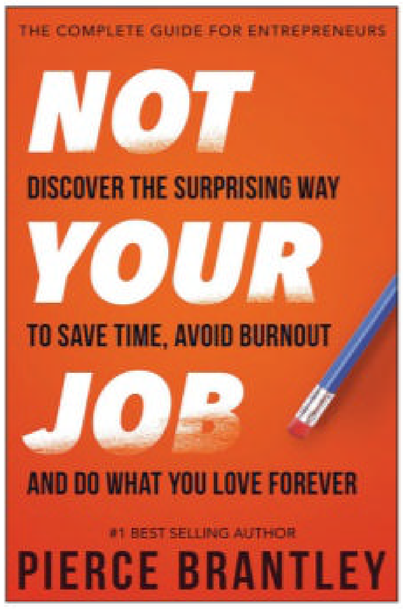
An inviting guide to a tried-and-true problem-solving method for making business decisions.

Great for fans of J.C. Baker's *How to Make Good Business Decisions*, Harvard Business Review's *On Making Smart Decisions.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B** | Design & typography: A | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

BUSINESS & PERSONAL FINANCE

Not Your Job: Discover the Surprising Way to Save Time, Avoid Burnout and Do What You Love Forever



Pierce Brantley | Invictas Publishing House
227p, e-book, $9.99, ISBN 979-8-987-06722-2

"The sooner you learn to delegate, the sooner you will increase your profits, recover your time, and live the dream you pursued at the onset of your entrepreneurial journey," writes Brantley (*Calling: Awaken to the Purpose of Your Work*) in this practical resource for business-minded readers. Brantley confronts the entrepreneurial burnout that so often follows on the heels of success, offering readers insider tips on delegating workloads as the "single most critical skill a talented entrepreneur needs to grow beyond themselves." He promises that achieving freedom, balancing time, and clinching success are not mutually exclusive.

Complete with a chapter summary for quick reference in the introduction, this concise, user-friendly guide offers valuable answers for beginners and experts alike. Brantley tailors the advice to the management level, cautioning against micromanaging and suggests mindful managing instead—the art of self-awareness combined with a calm acceptance of reality. He outlines fundamental business concepts in an easy-to-follow grid, including how to train new hires, categorizing employee work according to theme, and the need to research industry standards to accurately predict time management. On a more personal level, Brantley delves into boss/employee relationship dynamics, advising on good boundaries and employee empowerment.

Brantley breaks down his ideas smoothly, building on foundational knowledge with succinct advice. Once delegation becomes a well-practiced habit, Brantley suggests that trust and performance improvement will follow closely behind. With a focus on organization, time management, and employee relations, this is a must read guide for anyone in a business leadership role.

A user-friendly guide for entrepreneurs learning new ways to delegate and bring on help.

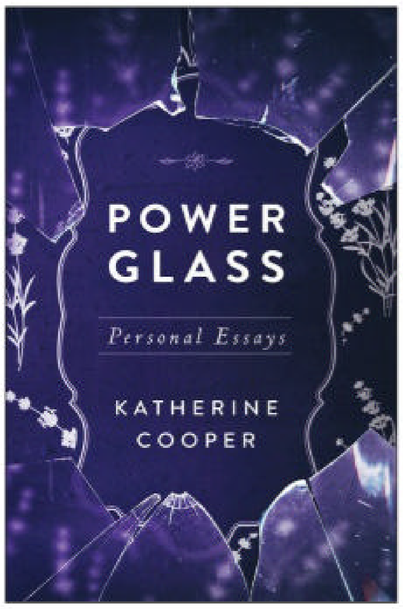
Great for fans of Charles C. Malone's *The Art of Delegation*, Julie Zhuo's *The Making of a Manager.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

NONFICTION

Power Glass: Personal Essays

Katherine Cooper | Ingramspark
137p, e-book, $22.99, ISBN 979-8-985-05510-8



Cooper's frank, illuminating essays take on the twin themes of power and fragility, with an eye toward how the first is distributed, measured, and exercised in a world so often hostile to women. An engineer in the nuclear energy industry, Cooper feels passionately about calling out, and remedying, the under-representation of women in STEM fields, an issue some of these essays address in detail. Other essays in *Power Glass*—which is divided into four sections with overarching themes of sex, service, society, and self—take on pressing matters related to that intersection of power and fragility, such as sexism in the nuclear energy industry, body image issues, and an account of Cooper being raped in college—an act about power, she notes, rather than sex. This is written with hard-earned perspective and a call for women to advocate for each other and "show solidarity for unfair treatment of other women."

Cooper presents power in contemporary society as one long succession of glass ceilings that must be patiently chipped away at, and that's precisely the work she proceeds to do in the book. Her outrage is primarily directed toward a patriarchal system that serves them, a system that has for millenia "tortured, demeaned, raped" women and shown them "in no uncertain terms that their brains aren't worth recognizing." Cooper connects historic and contemporary injustices into a clear, coherent case: from infanticide against young girls to ensure a male heir, to men's continued treating mensuration as unclean, to the pervasive fear of being "found out" or not good enough that women are inculcated to feel in the workplace.

Cooper faces all this with strength, analytical insight, and productive outrage, while writing throughout with clarity, sensitivity, and wit. Lovers of tell-it-like-it-is truth telling, stories of catharsis and growth, and the possibilities of enacting societal change will enjoy this book.

Illuminating essays about power, fragility, and breaking glass ceilings.

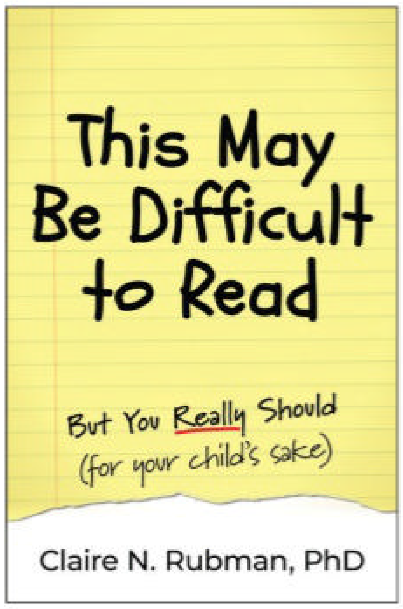
Great for fans of
Melissa Broder's *So Sad Today*, Jia Tolentino's *Trick Mirror.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

SELF-HELP, PARENTING

This May Be Difficult to Read: But You Really Should (for Your Child's Sake)

Claire N. Rubman | Education and Parenting Matters
237p, e-book, $19.99, ISBN 979-8-987-08611-7


This May Be Difficult to Read
But You Really Should (for your child's sake)
Claire N. Rubman, PhD

The title of this impassioned call for improving children's reading is a bit of a pun, but the book, ideal for parents seeking to develop within their children a fundamental and comprehensive understanding of reading, makes a highly serious and persuasive case. Noting that 42 million Americans are functionally illiterate, a fact psychologist and teacher Rubman laments is "readiculous," *This May Be Difficult to Read* considers, in disarmingly charming prose, the "fundamentally flawed" American way of teaching this skill that literate adults too often think of as somehow automatic. Rubman demonstrates throughout, with practical guidance and a wealth of compelling research, how that teaching can be more effective, tailored to individual children's needs and abilities.

"Reading is the linchpin of all future learning," Rubman notes, and she warns that the standard emphasis on "decoding" letters "devoid of meeting" sets kids up to fail. To that end she offers up clear, concise data and analysis of how children's brains actually develop and process information, shares illuminating anecdotes about her own children's development, and breaks down the complexities of reading comprehension. With an inviting spirit, Rubman dispels pervasive myths about childhood development, while presenting better options and learning techniques, adaptable to different learning styles.

The result is a book that shows how to discover the fun of learning to read, while building a solid foundation of comprehension. Some of the recommendations may surprise, such as Rubman's argument—arranged as a top 10 list!—for not teaching kids to read aloud before kindergarten. The result is eye-opening and convincing, presented in an upbeat, approachable manner.

An inviting corrective on how to teach fundamental reading skills, for parents.

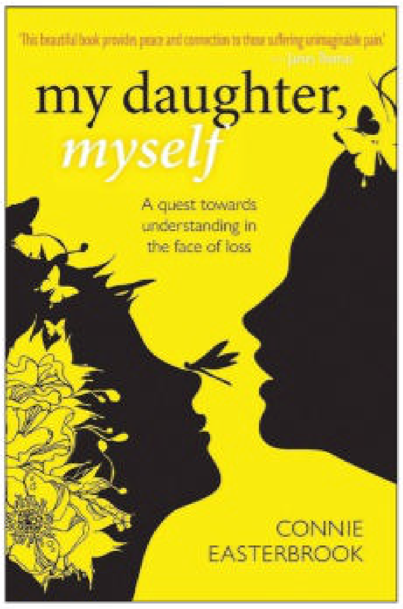
Great for fans of Jan Burkins & Kari Yates's *Shifting the Balance*, Jennifer Serravallo's *The Reading Strategies Book.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

MEMOIR

My Daughter, Myself

Connie Easterbrook | Book Therapy
256p, e-book, $34.99, ISBN 978-0-645-57141-7



Easterbrook explores, with rare sensitivity and insight, grief, loss, and motherhood in this memoir crafted both to capture the "inner light" of her late daughter, Simone, and to share with readers what she's learned about living on after bereavement. With a loving pen, Easterbrook offers an intimate portrait of daughter Simone, first exploring her "passionate, vibrant" eldest daughter with reflections on her personality, quirks, and virtues, but also delving into the challenges of parenting a child with ADHD, especially in a world that abhors "difference." The insight into family dynamics connects readers to Easterbrook and her daughter, especially as Easterbrook acknowledges that "anxiety about Simone was my constant companion throughout her life."

Simone died in a car accident at 21, a wrenching event that came at a fraught time for mother and daughter both. Easterbrook narrates the tensions in their relationships before the accident and the devastating aftermath with clear eyes, striking detail, and lots of heart, laying bare feelings of guilt, anger, shame—and "motherguilt." Throughout, as she recounts navigating and managing incalculable loss, she invites readers to learn from what she's faced, such as the hard-won comforts and insights she discovered in faith, support groups, and her reading. She explores her own past and parentage, and examines a violent relationship with a boy from her own teen years, noting the "footprint" trauma leaves on the soul.

A delight for readers are the images of Simone's artwork, and photographs of the family. Elsewhere, Easterbrook digs deeply into other losses, exploring how grief is always keyed to the specifics of individuals and their relationships, and her own tendency to push grief away. She writes with disarming openness about depression and anger, doubt and confusion, mining from her own experience and studies a wealth of practical advice for readers experiencing their own journeys of loss.

This powerful memoir offers practical advice and insight for parents facing grief.

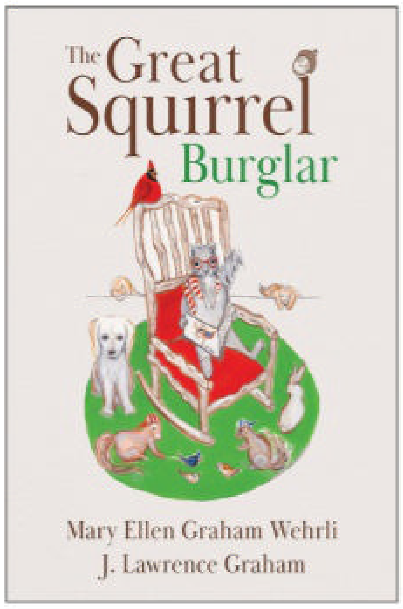
Great for fans of
September Vaudrey's *Colors of Goodbye*, Megan Devine's *It's OK That You're Not OK.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

PICTURE BOOKS

The Great Squirrel Burglar

Mary Ellen Graham Wehrli and J. Lawrence Graham | River Grove Books
32p, hardcover, $20.95, ISBN 978-1-538-11207-6
978-1-632-99361-2



In Wehrli and Graham's sweet picture book, a young squirrel named Jack Boy learns the value of family after spending a day with his Grandpa Earl. At first, Jack insists he has better things to do than hang out with his forgetful grandfather, whose tail is crooked and gray, and who always asks the same question: "Have you seen my acorns 'n' nuts? I can't remember where I hid them." But his mother insists, in the book's fun-to-repeat dialogue, that Jack do his duty: "One day, your own grandkits will help you when your tail gets a bit crooked and gray. That's the way families work and how they stay strong," she tells her son, and the story that follows reminds Jack Boy and readers that there's always more to discover about the squirrels—or people—you love.

Wehrli's dreamlike illustrations help bring this outdoorsy generational tale to life. The story takes place in the middle of winter, and the muted, soft-hued images seem to exist in a foggy, somewhat dreary land of endless frosty mornings. They travel around the strikingly rendered forest, asking animals if they know the location of the missing feed while Jack deals with his frustration at his grandfather's slowness—but when his cousin Stevie jumps out and tries to scare them, Jack is impressed that Earl does not even flinch. Eventually they learn a welcome surprise: grandpa used to be known as the Great Squirrel Burglar.

Jack's discovery will invite kids to delve deeper into the fascinating histories of the older people in their own lives. Wehrli's art makes Grandpa Earl's inspiring surprise stand out even more, as his superhero costume provides a pop of color and excitement to go along with Jack Boy's growing awareness that, even in his old age, his grandfather has a lot to offer.

A young squirrel learns the value of family after spending a day with his Grandpa.

Great for fans of
Margaret H. Mason's *These Hands*, Lisa Tawn Bergren's *Nana the Great Comes to Visit.*

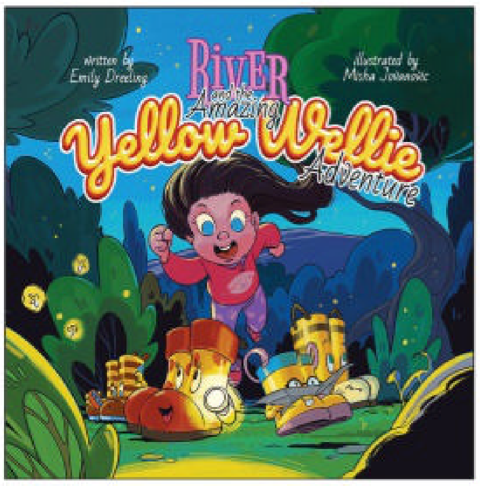
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

PICTURE BOOKS

River and the Amazing Yellow Wellie Adventure

Emily Dreeling | Rising River Press

36p, e-book, $9.99, ISBN 979-8-985-31056-6


written by Emily Dreeling
River and the Amazing Yellow Wellie Adventure
illustrated by Misha Jovanovic

After a particularly stormy day, Bertie, Lexie, Miley, and Teddy—all different pairs of young River's "favorite yellow wellington boots"—worry that the world beyond the garden gate is too scary. Thanks to some encouraging words from Trudy, "the most solid and sensible of the hallway umbrellas," the four friends decide to go on a journey to Galoshes Mountain. Along the way their human friend River joins their journey, and everyone learns that life is a little bit more magical than they thought. Written primarily through expressive dialogue (inflected, as you might expect, with Britishisms), *River and the Amazing Yellow Wellie Adventure* is an imaginative frolic sure to delight any reader looking for wonder, especially on rainy days.

River's excitement at learning that her favorite shoes can talk leaps off the page thanks to Jovanovic's illustrations, often framing her in a way that makes her larger than life. Similarly, the band of boots are shown on the ground at an angle that brings their personalities to the fore, adding another layer of enchantment to the narrative. The dialogue-driven storytelling makes Dreeling's tale a great candidate for reading aloud, and the frequent use of "wellie" is sure to stir warm laughter if only because the word is delightful—and to American ears still somewhat novel.

Simple in plot but full of heart and joy, *River and the Amazing Yellow Wellie Adventure* shows young readers that venturing outside of their comfort zone could result in self-discovery and a dose of enchantment. Whimsical illustrations and humorous dialogue make for an entertaining read and could motivate readers to get outside and explore themselves. Serving as a reminder that magic lives everywhere, including where you'd least expect it, this book will appeal to both young and old readers, because adventure, like a little rain, is for everyone.

Rain boots on an adventure learn about themselves and the wonders of the world.

Great for fans of Drew Daywalt's *The Day the Crayons Quit*, Jory John's *The Couch Potato*.

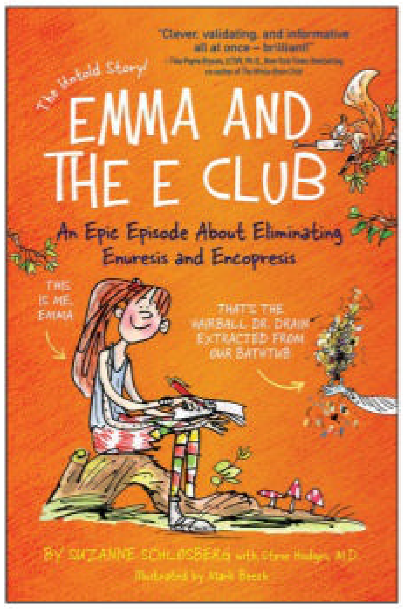
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **B** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

MIDDLE GRADE

Emma and the E Club: An Epic Episode About Eliminating Enuresis and Encopresis

Suzanne Schlosberg with Steve Hodges | O'Regan Press

148p, trade paper, $20.50, ISBN 979-8-986-67950-1


"Clever, validating, and informative all at once – brilliant!"
The Untold Story!
EMMA AND THE E CLUB
An Epic Episode About Eliminating Enuresis and Encopresis
THIS IS ME. EMMA
THAT'S THE HAIRBALL DR. DRAIN EXTRACTED FROM OUR BATHTUB
BY SUZANNE SCHLOSBERG with Steve Hodges, M.D.
Illustrated by Mark Beech

For most kids, bathroom-related accidents are too embarrassing to discuss, but that's not the case for 10-year-old Emma Easly. In Schlosberg's entertaining, conversational book for middle-grade readers, Emma openly discusses her struggles with enuresis, which she helpfully defines as "pee accidents," and encopresis, or "poop accidents," to help other kids feel less ashamed of what are actually common problems. Along with her friends from school, Emma has created the E Club, which gives other young people with the same issues a place to feel like they belong. She also collects words that start with E, which are listed at the end along with a series of word games.

The best part of this surprisingly lighthearted tale is Emma's sparkling personality, which makes reading this book feel like talking to a close friend. Emma may be the CEO of the E Club, but her medical conditions don't define her—she's smart, funny, and ambitious, declaring that she aspires to be "employed as an essayist." She's also capable, independent, and the best goalie on the soccer team, and she knows an impressive number of euphemisms for pooping, which she hilariously shares with her doctor. Seeing that Emma is just a normal kid will help children with similar concerns look more closely at their own positive qualities.

The story is accompanied by Beech's black-and-white illustrations, which are meant to look as though Emma could have sketched them herself. They primarily show people and places from Emma's life and imagination, such as Emma being carried on a palanquin and coining herself "the exalted empress of the enema empire." Ultimately this book serves as a reminder that accidents are never a kid's fault and that solutions do exist—but friendship and humor can help, too.

This entertaining, conversational story shows kids with enuresis and encopresis they're not alone.

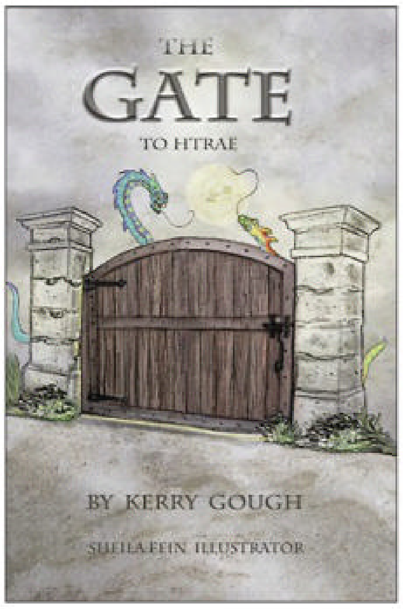
Great for fans of Tracey J. Vessillo's *I Can't, I Won't, No Way!*, Howard J. Bennett's *It Hurts When I Poop!*.

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **A**
Editing: **A** | Marketing copy: **A**

MIDDLE GRADE

The Gate to Htrae

Kerry Gough | Bookbaby
286p, e-book, $9.99, ISBN 978-1-667-83303-3



Gough's entertaining debut middle-grade fantasy pits light versus dark where teens must battle to save Earth and its mirror world, Htrae. Fifteen-year-old Alex and his younger brother, Drew, are drawn to open a locked old gate up the hill from their home—one that's useless, with no walls. When they find the trick and a magic key appears to them, they find it's an entrance to Htrae that Alex was destined to find in order to begin the journey he was chosen for to save both worlds from Natas (known as Satan on Earth). Led by the Gatekeeper, Zar and company—Alex, Drew, their parents, and their family's mirror-world twins, along with two other teens—must learn to use the tools they'll need for their first mission before the main battle: the rescue of an ally in Natas's prison.

As the teen heroes learn to use advanced scientific weapons, journey through wormholes, and deal with dark matter, Gough gives readers a story with a science lesson. However, for middle-grade readers—even some adult readers—the descriptions of how all of these things can be technical and complicated, slowing the story down. Still, the way the weapons are used, the traveling through wormholes and to different dimensions, and the idea of a mirror-world to Earth is exciting and will draw in young readers, and the science-minded will find the nuts and bolts of it all fascinating, if they can keep up.

Young characters with big responsibilities on their shoulders are well portrayed, continuing to have child-like and funny antics that occasionally get them into trouble, but also keep them grounded and empowered when it's time to get serious. This even includes a fun advanced droid that one of the boys creates in his likeness, but definitely has a mind of his own. The concerns from the adults who care for them are also relatable. Although the journey can get heady, the ideas behind the plot and the fun characters give this story hard science-fiction appeal.

Teens and their droid pal must stop mirror-world darkness in this science-minded adventure.

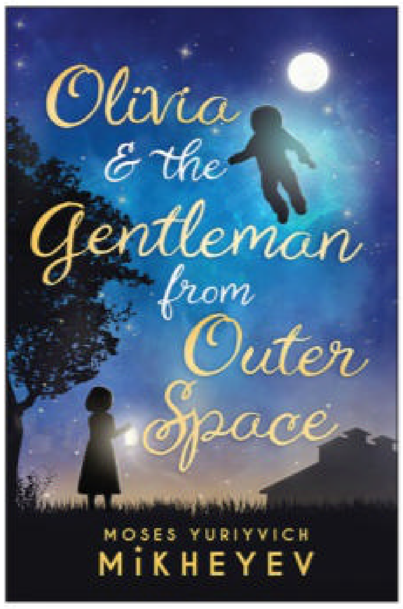
Great for fans of Joshua S. Levy's *Seventh Grade vs. the Galaxy*, Jennifer L. Holm's *The Lion of Mars.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **B** | Marketing copy: **A-**

MIDDLE GRADE

Olivia & the Gentleman from Outer Space

Moses Yuriyvich Mikheyev
175p, e-book, $0.99, ASIN B0BJ5PVJLK



Mikheyev's (*This Time Next Summer*) warmhearted middle-grade debut details the transformative journey of 12-year-old Olivia, who not only views the wonders of the cosmos with an otherworldly companion, but alters how she sees herself. Ordinary Olivia lives on a Kansas farm with her dad, whose lung cancer hasn't weakened his resolute optimism. On a quiet July night, she watches in astonishment as a spaceship crashes into their wheat field, and jumps into action only when she realizes her beloved German Shepherd is hurt. So the first, momentous meeting of Olivia Fierce and the intergalactic traveler Galax is a frantic plea to save her dog. This unnerving encounter doesn't shock her as much as what the boyish alien calls her: Madam Olivia, Princess of Blue Earth.

Olivia readily accepts the impossible, including Galax's power to heal, a prophecy, and a treasure map. Guiding him to the Black Ruby, which will restore his waning strength. But no way could she ever be a princess. Mikheyev charts Olivia's excitement and confusion with a first-person narration that captures both her impulsive nature and underlying compassion. He deftly uses color as an indicator of physical and emotional well-being. When Olivia and Galax enter a magnificent body of water floating in space, the riotous hues astound them, but as they steer toward danger, the environment becomes monochromatic, and Galax's blue skin glows and dims with his energy levels.

Olivia & the Gentleman from Outer Space reverberates with echoes from classic fantasies of displacement, but the effect is more personal than derivative. Mikheyev uses genre conventions to present young readers with a positive vision of the jarring changes ahead: it's only when Olivia becomes untethered from her identity as a restless, precocious kid that she can embrace her abilities. Olivia discovers that observation is a gift that opens up new worlds.

An introspective alien and gutsy girl team up for a mind-expanding adventure.

Great for fans of Lee Bacon's *The Last Human*, Nicole Kornher-Stace's *Jillian vs Parasite Planet.*

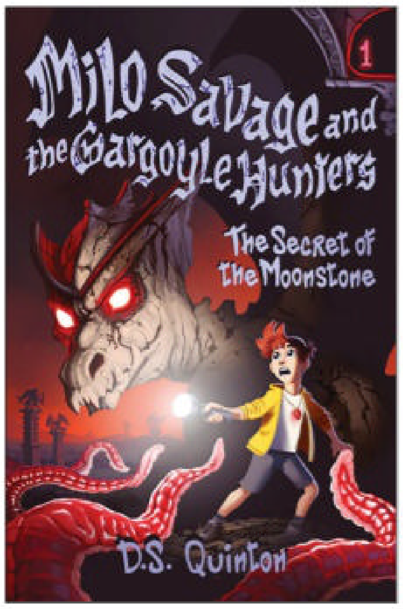
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **A-**

MIDDLE GRADE

Milo Savage and the Gargoyle Hunters: The Secret of the Moonstone

D.S. Quinton

250p, e-book, $3.99, ASIN B0BMQR8PHG



Quinton (author of The Spirit Hunter series) offers a high-stakes adventure following Milo Savage, an 11-year-old boy, as he learns about his destiny as a gargoyle hunter and finds himself forced to enter the gargoyle realm to rescue his trainer and great uncle, Horace. After being attacked on a school field trip by tentacled creatures, Milo is sent away to the Catskills to become an apprentice gargoyle hunter to Horace. When Horace is kidnapped by gargoyles, it is up to Milo, his three new friends—Sammy, Kat, and Suzy—and a talking dog to come to the rescue and to ensure the continued protection of humanity.

Engaging characterization grounds the adventure. Milo stands out as an authentic and sincere protagonist willing to try his best to be a hero, even if he isn't yet sure precisely what that will look like. Sammy shines as an intelligent, caring, and kind person who looks out for his friends no matter the cost, while Kat stands out as a strong, inspirational girl tired of being underestimated and ready to blow expectations out of the park, although a softer and more loving side is shown as she grows closer to her friends. The camaraderie and brisk dialogue make this group of children engaging to follow, and readers will be sure to cheer them on as they pass through the gargoyle mists to face dangers and solve riddles together.

Quinton springs welcome surprises, too, like the Snarlok gargoyles, a garden gnome named Grimlo, and much ado about Moonstones. The magic and puzzles are unpredictable, the gargoyle realm continually inventive, and the story well thought-through and engaging, both rewarding and upending expectations. At times, the pacing could be more brisk, but *Milo Savage and the Gargoyle Hunters* will keep young readers invested throughout. This middle-grade fantasy is captivating until the very last page.

This middle-grade fantasy adventure will entice young lovers of adventure, riddles, and surprises.

Great for fans of Karuna Riazi's *The Gauntlet*, Kazu Kibuishi's *The Stonekeeper.*

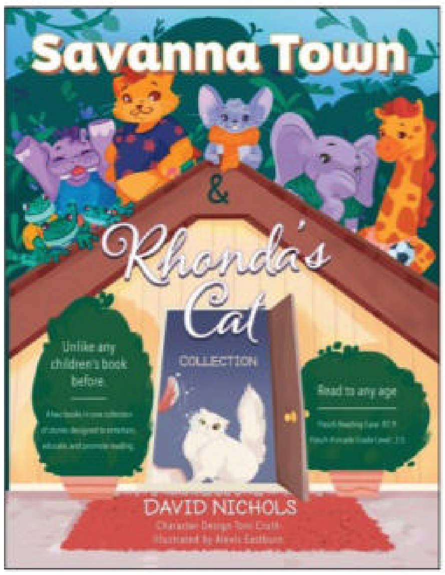
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

MIDDLE GRADE

Savanna Town & Rhonda's Cat Series Collection

David Nichols

120p, e-book, $29.99, ISBN 979-8-885-00146-8



In this engaging book for middle-grade readers, Nichols uses his background as a writing tutor to help kids hone their reading skills and vocabulary building through a series of 20 short stories. The first batch of vignettes focuses on the adventures of a close-knit group of animal friends living in Savanna Town, while the collection's second half centers on Lily, a fluffy white cat belonging to a little girl named Rhonda. The stories teach values such as honesty and integrity as the characters navigate challenges children will sympathize with, such as losing gracefully, sharing, and dealing with school bullies. The animals have dreams too—in one memorable scene, Lily fantasizes about being a rapper whose fans throw cat treats onto the stage.

Each story includes several vocabulary words that are defined in context, as well as questions adults can use to facilitate further discussion and enhance reading comprehension. In an entry about the importance of helping others, children are encouraged to identify specific plot points, such as why the school got damaged and why the children decided to help fix it. Other questions are more subjective—readers are invited to talk about whether they are afraid of heights, or why a student hid his feelings of anger from his teacher. This will help them understand and connect with the text while creating an opportunity to discuss complex feelings.

Eastburn's colorful illustrations show the smiling, wide-eyed animals interacting with each other at school, home, and other settings like the pond or the park, offering just enough detail to help children visualize the worlds they inhabit while filling in the rest with their own imagination. This book's main purpose is to serve as an educational tool, but these playful and relatable characters make sure learning is fun, too.

Twenty short, entertaining stories about friends and cats, to sharpen reading skills.

Great for fans of Peter Guthrie's *Little Worlds*; *The Scholastic Read-Aloud Anthology.*

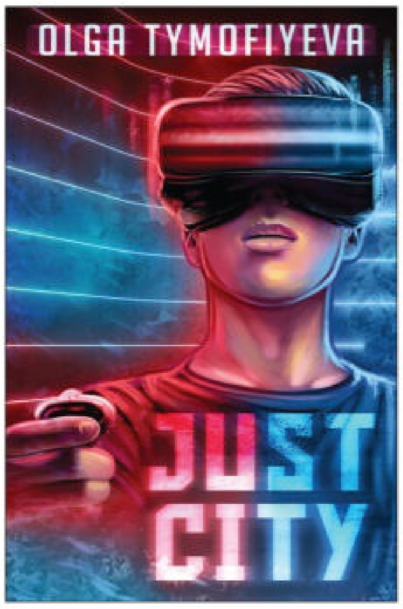
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: **A-**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **B+**

YOUNG ADULT

Just City

Olga Tymofireva

128p, e-book, $10, ISBN 979-8-3507-0178-4



Tymofiyeva debuts with a thought-provoking young adult sci-fi coming-of-age story that inspires while addressing deeper sociocultural issues of selfishness and implicit bias. Nathan and his friend Jack desperately need money to fund their startup for a chip-traceable shopping cart that will prevent people from taking carts from supermarkets. When Nathan's grandmother offers to pay them for testing out her new virtual reality game, Just City (a scientific experiment designed to help people step into others' shoes), they jump at the chance. The game opens up new horizons for the friends, both exciting and challenging, and before long Nathan starts to question his belief system as he's immersed in a mindset that focuses on love, not rationalization.

Just City plunges readers into engrossing self-exploration alongside Nathan, who plays the classical lost young man seeking the best version of himself. He begins the novel steeped in narrowmindedness and limiting beliefs, but his fight to become a better person is stirring. Readers will empathize with him as they follow his journey and his attempts to surround himself with new people who may (or may not) be looking out for his best interests. The novel culminates in a striking realization for Nathan: "[selfishness] is a value one can choose or not choose for oneself." Instead, it's rationality "that helps us find the best approximation to the truth."

Tymofiyeva depicts Nathan's growth toward that idea with heart and persuasive power. Despite its philosophical bent, the story is sharply plotted, moving along at a fair pace. The emphasis on increasing Nathan's awareness of prejudice is welcome, as is Tymofiyeva's attempt to introduce readers to meditation and concepts of higher awareness. The ending builds to a powerful lesson on free will and human interconnectedness. Young seekers who enjoy contemplative fiction, rich in this is a polished, illuminating read.

This standout YA SF novel invites readers to reflect on life, philosophy, and tech.

Great for fans of
Brittney Morris's *Slay*, Cory Doctorow and Jen Wang's *In Real Life.*

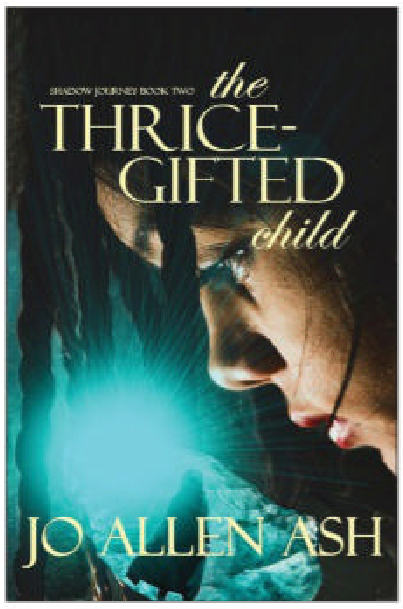
PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A-** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **A-** | Marketing copy: **A**

YOUNG ADULT

The Thrice-Gifted Child: Shadow Journey, Book Two

Jo Allen Ash | Potter Street Books

275p, e-book, $17.95, ISBN 979-8-987-06811-3



In this dystopian young adult fantasy, the second of her Shadow Journey series, Ash (*The Shadows We Make*) combines skillful world-building and compelling characters for a fanciful tale readers will devour. Sixteen-year-old brave warrior Grace Irese and teenage con artist Duncan Oaks are fighting for their lives after escaping from Emerald, the prison planet, where they'd both been sentenced to imprisonment. Trying to make a new life on a planet where Grace expects to find answers to an urgent mystery, they save Duncan's sister Resa—the thrice-gifted child of the title —and team up with a loyal group of friends. Their escape is short-lived, as a tyrant in their new world is determined to eliminate Grace, Duncan, and everyone in their group.

As they battle for their very existence, these brave teens fight the eternal quest of good versus evil, complete with beasts, replicants, and a lost city—and lovers of YA SF adventures will be enchanted by the ride. Told alternately by Grace and Duncan and selected supporting cast, the story takes its characters on an epic journey, rife with unexpected twists and turns that will keep readers quickly turning the pages. Grace is an especially engaging character, and her journey will resonate most. Minor editing issues at times distract, but Ash's talent for plotting, her richly painted universe, and her well-drawn characters and dialogue compel.

The tale is imaginative and suspenseful, especially for a second book, as the heroes dare to head into the last place anyone expects, the war-ravaged, now-overgrown Wilds. Ash wrings memorable tension from their desperation, the possibility of lost lore and magic, and the pursuit of Stone Tiran's soldiers. Readers who have joined their dangerous journey will likely be eager for the next installment of this engaging story.

This epic adventure will enchant readers who enjoy SF worlds and flawed characters.

Great for fans of Amie Kaufman and Meagan Spooner's Starbound series, Beth Revis's *Across the Universe.*

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **B+** | Design & typography: **A** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **A-**

YOUNG ADULT

Grady Whill and the Templeton Codex: A Superhero High School Story

Carole P. Roman | Chelshire
286p, trade paper, $10.99, ISBN 978-1-950-08043-4

A SUPERHERO HIGH SCHOOL ADVENTURE
GRADY WHILL AND THE TEMPLETON CODEX
CAROLE P. ROMAN

Roman launches her heady, action-packed high school superhero series by flipping the classic origin story narrative from centering on an embrace of power to an understanding of powerlessness. Downtrodden eighth-grader Grady Whill views high school as an opportunity for reinvention, and hopes he won't have to focus so much on defending his neurodivergent best friend, Aarush Patel. In piquant first-person narration, Grady creates a vivid portrait of Aarush as obsessive and brilliant, but also an observant and loyal friend who should be appreciated instead of bullied. Their mutual devotion irks Elwood Bledsoe, the popular football star who torments them, because Grady was his partner in mischief before adopting Aarush's more gentle worldview.

To Grady's astonishment, all three of them are accepted into the inaugural class of Templeton Academy, whose curriculum promises to transform the best and brightest into something even more extraordinary. Roman imbues some familiar hero-academy elements with new depth and feeling. What becomes a superhero most is the ability to understand themselves and appreciate others, truths Roman explores along with relatable high school angst and all the mind-expanding possibilities the premise offers. Paralyzed by insecurity, Grady is wary of big dreams because he's experienced loss: his parents died when he was an infant, and more loss followed. Templeton Academy provides an alluring escape.

Still, while the Academy's utopian futurism intoxicates Aarush, Grady is underwhelmed. Grady sees life as an obstacle course, not a road to enlightenment, and Roman expertly steers young adult readers down these parallel paths until they converge. Roman grounds the characters with real-world struggles (like Grady's asthma), which raises the stakes during a climactic battle that determines their future.

This smart superhero academy story challenges convention.

Great for fans of Drew Hayes's *Super Powereds*, Julianna Scott's *The Holders*.

PRODUCTION GRADES: Cover: **A** | Design & typography: **A-** | Illustrations: **–**
Editing: **B+** | Marketing copy: **A-**

BOOKSELLERS & LIBRARIANS:

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"Historical novel readers crave a narrative that has conflict, meaning, and some sort of dramatic arc, even though real life might have a lot of the first and none at all of the second and third."

Just the Facts

A historical fiction writer discusses the perils of sticking too tightly, or too loosely, to history

By Christine Wells

When I pitched *One Woman's War: A Novel of the Real Miss Moneypenny* in October 2020, I had no idea that *Operation Mincemeat*, a movie about the same subject matter, would be released in early 2022, just a few months before *One Woman's War* was due out.

Both fictional works are based on a real British Naval Intelligence operation of World War II, where a corpse dressed as a royal marine was left in waters off the coast of Spain. The deceased marine carried papers suggesting that the European invasion would take place via Greece, rather than the true landing point of Sicily. Spoiler: German spies got hold of the documents and Hitler fell for the ruse, diverting troops from Sicily to Greece. Many thousands of Allied lives were saved as a result.

There have since been several retellings of this eccentric operation. The truth has all of the trappings of a good, old-fashioned spy story, perhaps because the mastermind behind it was destined to become one of the best-known thriller writers of all time: James Bond author Ian Fleming. When real events unfold like fiction, it becomes the task of the fiction writer to make those real events seem plausible. But do authors of historical fiction have a greater duty to readers not to stray too far from the truth than filmmakers have to their audiences?

Avid readers of historical fiction seem to demand historical accuracy in every particular—or at least in the particulars in which those readers, themselves, happen to be experts. Yet even the keenest historical pedant has low expectations of anything out of Hollywood. These movies exist to entertain not teach.

However, people do expect greater adherence to the facts in novels. They want to experience history. Readers of historical fiction want to see events unfold through the protagonist's eyes and feel the characters' emotions. Whether they are conscious of it or not, historical novel readers crave a narrative that has conflict, meaning, and some sort of dramatic arc, even though real life might have a lot of the first and none at all of the second and third.

In the case of Operation Mincemeat, fortunately for screenwriters and authors alike, the bare facts of the strategic effort provide a strong plot. Still, a little creative intervention was needed at certain points to turn those facts into a novel.

A common problem I see in war novels occurs when a significant part of the action takes place in theaters in which none of the main characters are present. This is particularly difficult when writing from a first-person or close-third-person point of view.

There were two aspects to this problem for Operation Mincemeat. The first was a lack of direct, active conflict with the enemy when all of the planning for the operation took place in London. The second was that the events unfolding in Spain and Germany needed to be conveyed to the audience somehow, even though the main characters didn't witness them.

Both the filmmakers and I chose to depart from the facts here and create a story thread that brings the enemy to London in some form—mine is in the guise of another point-of-view character, an Austrian double agent based in London, who is given the task of verifying the intelligence from the corpse and reporting back to German high command. In the movie, the enemy comes to London in the form of the bartender at the Gargoyle Club who claims to be working for a disaffected group from German military intelligence.

As for the action that takes place in Spain and Berlin, in the film, the story briefly shifts to Spain and is told from the point of view of a character we haven't seen much of until that point—a technique a novelist would find far more difficult to get away with. I decided to convey the same information in an active—though not historically accurate—way, sending my Austrian double agent first to Portugal, then to Berlin, where she could be privy to Nazi intelligence gathering and analysis.

The final and greatest challenge when writing about Operation Mincemeat was imagining personal stories and conflicts for my main characters. The filmmakers, too, added private difficulties for the characters that jeopardized the operation, although they were very different from the problems I created.

While filmmakers tend to be forgiven far more easily for taking liberties with historical facts, we novelists do have the advantage over filmmakers in one respect: a magical thing called the author's note, where we can explain ourselves—and beg most humbly for the forgiveness of our discerning readers. ■

Christine Wells is the author of Sisters of the Resistance *and* One Woman's War.

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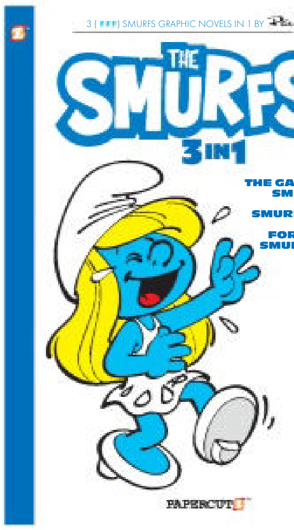

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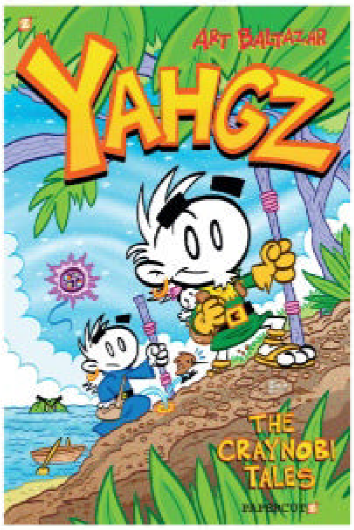

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GRAPHIC NOVEL MAGIC:

By: Allison Pond

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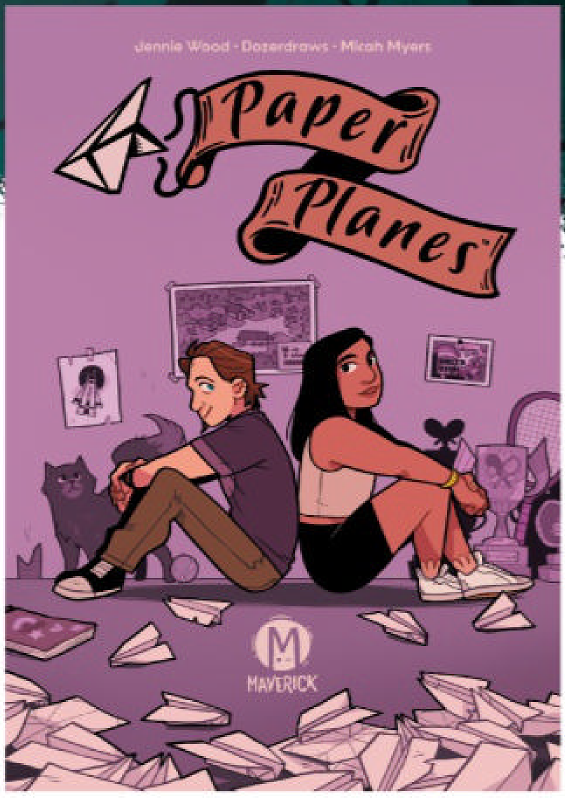

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Leighton Worthington and Dylan Render have always been inseperable, but when they're both shipped off to a summer camp for troubled youth in the aftermath of a life-altering event, their lifelong friendship is put to the test.

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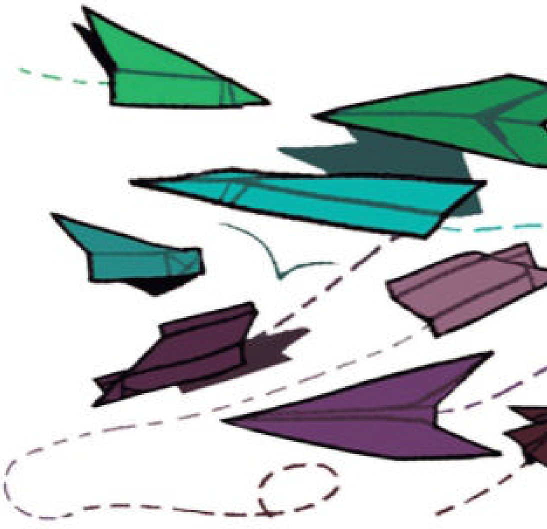
JENNIE WOOD · WRITER

Salisbury, NC / Boston, MA

Jennie Wood is a non-binary author, musician and creator of the Flutter graphic novel series. Flutter was named one of The Advocate's best LGBTQ graphic novels of the year, a Barnes & Noble book of the month, a Virginia Library Association Diversity Honor Book and published as a collection by Dark Horse. Their work can be seen in several anthologies, including the Eisner award-winning Love is Love, Planet Comics, and John Carpenter's Tales for a HalloweeNight.



DOZERDRAWS · ARTIST

Nürnberg, Germany

Dozer is a nonbinary illustrator, comic artist and bird parent from Germany. They've done work on Mad Cave Studios' The Last Session, Lumberjanes, and several German TV and movie animation gigs. They are always looking for new exciting stories and diverse characters to illustrate

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